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HER MAJESTY'S PRISONS:

THEIR

EFFECTS AND DEFECTS.

BY ONE WHO HAS TRIED THEM.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

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IN writing the following narrative, I have been earnestly desirous of exposing, as far as lay in my power, the ill-treatment and petty tyranny existing in some of our prisons, and, at the same time, of pointing out what appeared to me the weak points in the present system of conducting local prisons.

In order to fairly and impartially carry out my intentions, I have been obliged to put all personal considerations on one side, and to strive only to set down the simple and *exact* truth.

Feeling that I had no right to slur over the faults of any of the officials, I have spoken out plainly where I deemed it necessary. I cannot see that I could do otherwise; indeed, I was morally bound to do so, for I had no right to let personal kindness shown to myself influence me in the slightest degree, when so many hundreds—ay, thousands of unhappy



men might be placed in the power of those whom I knew to be unfitted, either by temperament or acquired habits, for carrying on the discipline of a most important branch of the public service. Had I yielded to the temptation of doing this, I might have been assisting in the ruin of many hundreds of first offenders who now leave prison brutalized, callous, and utterly hardened by the treatment they receive there.

The reformation of the criminal is allowed on all sides to be the great object aimed at, and this must, and does, in a great measure, depend upon what the rules and regulations are, and how they are carried out.

I now send these pages forth, with their many blemishes, their many defects, hoping—praying—that by their means some of the abuses of our present prison system may be stamped out, some of the unnecessary cruelties prevented in the future, and some better mode of reclaiming criminals be adopted.

*April 16th, 1881.*

# HER MAJESTY'S PRISONS:

## THEIR EFFECTS AND DEFECTS.

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WHY, where, or for what I was arrested, matters not to the reader; all I wish to show in the following narrative is some of the abuses that take place in the administration of our criminal laws, and to induce, if possible, the authorities to place a more strict surveillance over the conduct of petty police officials.

I was apprehended by the chief constable himself. He came round to the hotel, and asked me to come over to the Guildhall with him. As soon as I arrived there, he read me a telegram from the superintendent of a neighbouring town, asking him to detain me, as a warrant had been issued for my apprehension.

The chief constable was a little, ferret-eyed, bibulous-nosed, shabbily-dressed individual, and I had not the slightest idea that he was any-

thing but a man who had risen from the ranks. I thought I would flatter him a little, and said : “ Well, I suppose you and I can talk to each other as gentlemen? If this matter becomes public it would be a great nuisance for my family, and the charge is a mistake.”

He said : “ Yes, certainly ; the word of Thomas Jones has never yet been broken, I think ; and whatever you say about your private concerns I give you my word I will not divulge.”

We thereupon had some conversation, and I found he immediately tried to pump out of me damaging admissions, and it placed me on my guard.

He said : “ Now do be frank with me, I am an officer and a gentleman. I have been in the royal artillery, and you can thoroughly depend upon me.”

I stared at him, for I thought “ My word ‘ R. A.’ generally turns out something considerably above your mark ;” and my idea was correct, for I afterwards discovered that he never had been in the regular service, but had only been a marine.

On arriving at the Guildhall he took me into a private office, and read over to me again the telegram.

I said : " Well, what are you going to do ? I protest against this charge."

He said : " Well, I am going to take you into custody, and I must trouble you to hand over all you have in your pockets."

I said : " You have no business to take anything from me. You have simply orders to detain me on a certain charge, and you have no right whatever to take away anything from me."

He said : " Well, I mean to take them, and shall use force if you resist."

" Very well," I replied ; " under protest I hand over my watch and chain, rings and money."

He quietly took them all, never giving me a receipt for the money, as he ought, and then demanded my keys.

I said : " I am perfectly certain you have no right to touch any of my things. You have simply a telegraphic order to detain me, saying that a constable will be sent with the warrant to-morrow ; till he comes all you have got to do is to see that I don't escape."

He however insisted, and I had of course in the end to give them up. The money I gave him amounted to a largish sum, but he gave me no receipt.

Let me here state, that it is a regular custom

to take all money found upon a man, no matter what his crime is, and for the police to quietly retain it. As a matter of fact, all money found upon the man ought to be handed back to him, unless he is charged with stealing the actual money found upon him.

Having handed over all I had in my pockets, I was allowed to sit in the office till eleven p.m., and then taken out to the cells. The state of these cells was beneath contempt. Dirty, dark, unventilated, they would have been a disgrace to an Austrian prison. Simply a raised board to lie upon, and not even a rug for a man to cover himself with. No possible convenience of any description, and no light excepting through a small, dirty pane of glass over the door. Luckily I had an ulster and rug with me, or, delicate man as I was, the result might have been serious.

I got through the night somehow or the other, and about eight o'clock next morning a constable came to see that I was alive. I applied for some breakfast, offering to pay for it out of my own money, but was told that the chief constable must be applied to ; the result was that I got some very inferior tea and a hunk or two of bread and butter about eleven o'clock. I applied also for leave to wash my



hands and face, and for my hair-brushes to be brought to me. But cleanliness seemed to be thought quite an unnecessary luxury.

Tumbled, dirty, and tired out, I had, at twelve o'clock, to appear before the magistrates, to be formally remanded until the constable should arrive with the warrant. This proceeding was quite unnecessary, but the snob of a chief constable liked to do all the dirty work himself, and was never happy unless his name appeared in every police report.

I learned that the constable would be down by three o'clock, and made an application to have some lunch, but without avail. A little before three o'clock the constable, whom I knew, arrived with the warrant, and I said: "I am now under your charge, send me in some lunch."

He immediately gave orders that this should be done, and I then asked him what he proposed doing.

"Well, sir," he said, "my orders are to take you and everything belonging to you back with me, but Captain Jones declines to give up either your money or jewellery."

"Nonsense, there is no question about the money or the jewellery; it is mine, and it had no business ever to have been taken from me, and I demand it," I said.

"I have demanded it too, sir," he replied ; "but it is no use, he won't give the things up. Now get your lunch, sir, and in about half an hour I will come round with a fly, and we shall be able to catch the express. I wish to do everything as quietly as I can," he continued, "but you know I am responsible for you."

When we were in the fly he said : "My orders are to handcuff you."

I said : "I protest against anything of the kind. I am, as far as you know, a perfectly innocent man, and I decline to allow you to do anything of the sort ; and if you insist upon it, it will be at your peril, for I shall bring the matter before the magistrates at the first opportunity."

With a good deal of hesitation the constable (whom we will call White) consented to let me go without handcuffs, but the inspector had no business to have ordered him to put them on.

We arrived at our destination about half-past seven, and soon after eight I was in the police-station. I had no sooner arrived than the inspector commenced a severe cross-examination of me, never once cautioning me ; but I answered very carefully, and finally declined to answer any more questions.

He then tried bullying me, but I very soon let him know that wouldn't do ; and so in disgust he ordered me to be taken to the cells and locked up.

The cell here was considerably better than the previous one, but the accommodation even here, with all the latest modern improvements, was bad enough. The ventilation was provided for by knocking a pane out of the window (it was in the winter) ; the sleeping arrangements consisted of a raised bench and a couple of rugs ; this was the whole furniture. The cell was about eight feet long and seven broad ; the floor boarded, and the walls white-washed.

I had arranged for the local solicitor to come round the first thing next morning, so I made myself as comfortable as was possible with my rugs and coats, and went quietly to sleep.

The next morning I applied for some breakfast, and was informed that as my money had been retained there would be some difficulty about the matter. I however felt certain that Government did not starve men arrested on suspicion of crime, and I insisted upon knowing what the regulations were.

“ Well,” said the inspector, “ we are allowed a halfpenny an hour for a prisoner's food. You

can have some bread and milk if you like." And I did eventually get a very good bowl of bread and milk.

There ought to be a fixed quantity and quality of food for each meal, and a dietary placed in every police cell, so that men might know what they were entitled to. Under the present system it is a regular dodge for constables, bringing in prisoners who have been committed for trial from outlying districts, to give the unfortunate men nothing to eat, unless they have money of their own. In some of the northern counties, where the railroads are scarce, men are often nine and ten hours getting to the county town, and the constable quietly pockets the halfpenny an hour allowed by government.

After breakfast I managed to get my brushes and combs and some spare clothes from the inspector, and induced him to put a chair in my cell. At twelve I had to appear in the town-hall, to be formally remanded till the following day. I sent off a letter to my friends, asking them to send me money for food, as I found from the inspector that he was only inclined to give me another relay of bread and milk for dinner, or, if I preferred it, a piece of bread and cheese. If this was all I

could get, it may be imagined that an ordinary prisoner would come exceedingly short.

There is a great fuss made about any letters you receive or send, and no newspapers may be supplied you; but the whole thing is the most perfect nonsense, as one gives all letters to one's solicitor, and makes one's friends write to him, and he brings them in with him, and as soon as you are alone hands them over to you, and does just the same with the newspapers.

The clergyman of a neighbouring parish, whom I knew a little, most kindly came over to see me during the afternoon, and went down and complained to the magistrate about the accommodation I was supplied with, and also informed the inspector of the step he intended taking. The consequence was that I had a mattress and a table placed in my cell, though I am bound, in fairness to the inspector, to say that his wife, who knew where everything was kept, had been away and had only returned that afternoon.

The next day the old magistrate came down to see whether I was comfortable or not. I told him,—

“Oh, yes. I was as comfortable as could be expected under the circumstances,” and invited him down to see my suite of apartments.



I made arrangements with the inspector for his wife to supply me with the food I required, as I now had the means of doing so, and as she had been a cook in some gentleman's family and thoroughly understood her business, I got on capitally. I luckily had a travelling-bath with me, and got them to let me have it in the adjoining cell, for in the cells themselves there was no accommodation whatever for washing.

With men remanded, as they continually are in these lock-ups, for a week at a time, it really is a scandal that a man should have no means of keeping himself clean.

There was a fireplace in the passage, facing the doors of the cells, and the superintendent, who came over from headquarters ordered a fire to be lighted there; so of a night I used to go and sit by it, with either the sergeant or one of the young constables, and many a queer story I learnt of the dodges of the police service.

Amongst other things, I was given to understand that whatever the superior says the junior must stick to, and a man declining to perjure himself at the command of his sergeant, inspector, or even superior constable, would have the force made so hot for him that he would have to leave it. In fact, as far as I could

learn the whole system was wrong. The orders issued, or at all events understood, are not to stop crime, but to apprehend the man after the crime has been committed ; and if a constable could induce a man to commit a crime, so that he might have the pleasure of taking him as soon as he had done what was suggested, it was considered an exceedingly clever trick.

Any really respectable man joining the force either leaves it in disgust after a short trial, or, refusing to conform to the private regulations and attempting to do his duty honestly and straightforwardly, was certain to be dismissed within a short period. One very grave fault is, that as soon as a crime is committed in any particular neighbourhood the local constable, instead of trying to find out who did commit the crime, immediately begins to think who was the most likely man to have done it ; and then he and the local inspector and sergeants lay their heads together to prove this particular individual guilty, quite regardless of any evidence there may be against any other person. In this they are ably assisted by ninety-nine out of every hundred county justices, to whom a man in custody is like a red rag to a bull, and their whole desire is to send him to prison as soon as possible.

Why on earth they cannot have a county judge for criminal cases appointed for each county, just as the county court judges are appointed, I do not understand. Surely, a man's liberty and whole future life are of as much importance as the small paltry sums that are usually sued for in county courts? I have nothing to say against the characters of the majority of justices, who are worthy English country gentlemen, but it is perfectly absurd to set up a pack of squires, parsons, and soldiers to be judges of their fellow-men. They are totally unfit for it; they have had no practical training for it, are perfectly ignorant how to weigh evidence, and lack the necessary experience that a trained lawyer has in picking out what part of a witness's evidence to accept and what to reject. Government might just as well appoint a lot of lawyers and stockbrokers to be judges at cattle-shows and ploughing-matches.

From what I learnt from the police and warders I believe there is more injustice perpetrated in England by the great unpaid than in any other civilized country in the world. I have no wish to exaggerate the evils of the system, nor have I any spite against justices. My own brother is one, and usually chairman

of quarter sessions, and I have uncles and cousins by the dozen who are justices, but I do say that it is an outrage that it should be in the power of any fussy old county justice, without the slightest professional training, to ruin and disgrace a man for life.

This, however, is *en passant*; let us now return to our muttons.

I was duly brought before a county magistrate, who made the usual idiotic blunders, allowed all kinds of totally irrelevant and improper questions to be asked by the county clerk, and admitted all kinds of statements that were not evidence at all, and which were promptly disposed of by the judge when the case came into a real court of law, but which meantime created great prejudice against me in the minds of the bumpkins from whom the jury would eventually be selected. The whole of a long day I had to sit in a room crowded to excess, and listen to utterly useless repetitions of evidence, some of which was not evidence at all.

Vainly my solicitor objected to letters being put in that had never been in any way proved to have come from me. Vainly I protested in person. The worthy specimen of the great unpaid, with his hands gravely folded (the said

hands being encased in rusty old black gloves with fingers at least an inch too long), shook his wooden old head, and asserted "they would throw great light on the case." The only thing that relieved the monotony was that occasionally rounds of applause were given—generally, candour obliges me to state, when any evidence telling in my favour was produced. However, all things came to an end, and eventually I was allowed to return to the retirement of the lock-up.

The next day I had to go down again to listen to a repetition of all that had taken place the day before, and finally the old justice shook his venerable old hatched-shaped head more solemnly than ever, and informed my solicitor that it was useless his addressing the court, as he had quite made up his mind, *i.e.*, to send the case for trial.

The chief constable of the neighbouring county had been subpoenaed to appear, and one of the features of the day was his being made to give up my money and jewellery.

This he was very loth to do, and ultimately produced a much smaller sum than I believe I handed over to him. Having given me no receipt as he ought to have done, and I, notwithstanding his very unfavourable personal



appearance, having taken his word that the money would be all right, I was now obliged to grin and bear it.

He came to me at the trial and told me that he had only kept my things because he didn't like to trust them to a "cad of a common constable;" but from after-experience, I found it was far better to trust a "cad of a common constable" than a cad of a chief constable.

Having been formally committed to take my trial, I now found that I should have the next day to go to the county gaol, as the next assizes would not be held for some three weeks.

My money and jewellery having been handed over to the county authorities, I now applied to the justice to give me back my property, as there was no question whatever that it was legally mine. He however declined, stating that there was a new Act by which valuable property found on people committed to take their trial might be retained by the authorities to go towards defraying the expenses of the prosecution, provided the judge trying the case made an order to that effect.

Meantime, as there was no means of knowing whether the judge would make any such order, I protested against their being retained, and claimed them in order to obtain money for my

defence. Finally, I obtained what the chief constable had left of my money, but my jewellery they stuck to.

I may as well state here that I believe they had no earthly right to take the course they did, as the learned judge who tried the case ordered all the jewellery to be handed back to me.

The same afternoon I packed up the things I thought I should require, and left the rest of my things to be forwarded to my friends.

Later on in the day the inspector and I started by rail for the county prison, and after about an hour's journey arrived at the formidable-looking gates and solemnly pulled the bell.

My curiosity was thoroughly aroused, and I kept my eyes and ears open to all that passed and made mental notes of all that happened.

Slowly the postern-gate swung back upon its hinges, and the inspector and I stepped into the precincts of the prison. The gate-porter, a tall, stout, and very consequential-looking fellow, stared in a patronizing manner at me, made a few feeble remarks about the weather to the inspector, languidly took the bundle of papers concerning me, strolled across the covered archway in which we were standing,

tugged at a bell-handle labled "Men," sighed deeply, as if the exertion was really too much for his nervous system, and finally subsided against the wall and stared solemnly at me.

I meanwhile looked about. On the left-hand side was an office, containing a table, scales for weighing men on reception, description-book, &c. To the right side of the office door hung three bell-handles, labelled respectively "Men," "Women," "Debtors." These communicated with the receiving-wards of the respective departments, and brought forth the receiving warder or wardress as the case might be.

After waiting about five minutes, a fat, grey-whiskered old fellow came puffing and blowing from the main building, whispered something to the inspector, and then turned to me, saying, civilly, that he was the receiving-warder, and that if I would follow him he would put me through all right.

I wished the inspector good-bye, picked up my bag, and quietly followed my conductor through the inner gates, down a roadway, and, turning to the right through an arched doorway, found myself within the prison proper.

A long, low, narrow kind of hall presented itself to my view, with a row of doors on each

side, at the top right-hand side an office with measuring apparatus, &c.

“Sorry to see you in such a place as this, sir,” said the receiving-warder, “but now you are here you must make the best of it. Come in here a minute; I must take your description.”

This old warder was a queer old chap; he went by the popular name of “Old Bob,” and if anything was to be got out of anybody he was bound to have his share. He had been a Marine, and the way he would shout, spit, grumble, and swear, when occasion required, was a caution. He was a rough, unfeeling old fellow, and treated men uncommonly badly sometimes; though I am bound to say he was outwardly civil and attentive to me. He combined the two billets of receiving and hospital warder, and a man more totally unfit for the latter position it would have been difficult to discover had you searched England over. He also did the flogging, and it was owing to his knowledge in this department of polite education that he had originally obtained the billet, as the other men who applied for the situation at the time were old soldiers, and ignorant of the noble art of cat-o’-nine-tailing their fellow-men. I shall have a good many

little anecdotes to relate of "Bob" before I have finished, so we will leave further description of him for the present.

I had meantime entered his office, and gazed curiously round at the extraordinary medley presented to my astonished gaze. On the walls were hung various printed papers, containing instructions for taking descriptions of men, dietaries for sick prisoners, instructions for contagious diseases, rows of handcuffs, two cat-o'-nine-tails, a truncheon, kettle, pots, mugs, and, on the desk, a heterogeneous mass of papers, tobacco, letters, tea, sugar, ointment, money, and heaven only knows what besides.

Bob produced a huge book, took up a pen, stuck himself at an angle of forty-five degrees to the right of the book, puffed, spit, softly cursed, and began to fill in the printed form with a description of my personal appearance.

Bob's education had been neglected in his youth, and this taking descriptions was his special aversion. When the prison came under government, Bob was informed that he would have to take the descriptions.

"Prescriptions!" said Bob; "what do I know about prescriptions? D—— prescriptions!"

The unfeeling prison commissioners, however, had determined that it was part of a

receiving-warder's duty, and so poor Old Bob had to do it somehow or the other.

I looked to see what Bob was stating about my personal appearance, and could hardly help laughing when I saw that my build was "preproportionate," and my eyes "blew." He then asked if I had any marks on my body. I said, "No;" so I was duly entered as having no distinctive marks, though, for all he knew, I might have had a dozen. Then my religion, age, profession, married or single, height, weight, and amount of money in my possession, had to be entered; and, after some twenty minutes of agony to poor Old Bob, the job was at last complete.

Would I have a bath? was the next question.

No, I had had one that morning.

Would I wear my own clothes, or have the uniform provided by government for prisoners waiting trial?

Would most certainly wear my own things.

"Now, for the present," said Bob, "I must put you into one of the cells down here, and then, when the doctor has been his rounds, you will be passed through and up into the prison proper."

"Shall I be able to take my bag with me?" I asked.

“No,” said Bob, “that is against the regulations, unless the governor gives a special order.”

“Well, can I take my comb and brushes, and rug and great coat?”

Well, Bob thought he might stretch a point and let me have my comb and brushes, but it would not do to let me have any clothes without the special order.

Could I have some food that I had brought with me?

“Yes,” Bob said, “that was according to regulation;” and then, evidently afraid that I should get him to do something that was against *regulation*, he hurried out of the office, telling me to follow him, passed down to one of the numerous doors on the right-hand side of the passage, unlocked it, and motioned to me to enter.

I had no sooner done so than click went the door, and I was left to realize my position. Four whitewashed walls stared me in the face; on the left-hand side a small deal table and stool, in the corner a closet seat, in the opposite corner two slate shelves, the top one containing a hammock and clothes neatly rolled up and strapped, the lower one two mess tins, a salt-cellar, towel, copper basin, and wooden spoon.



On each of the side-walls were two iron hooks, on which I afterwards learnt the hammock was suspended for the night.

The cell was about fourteen feet long, nine feet high in the centre (the roof was arched), and seven broad. The slate floor, white walls, and everything in the cell, were painfully clean, and the ground-glass window shed a sickly, disheartening light, that made one almost shudder.

However, there was nothing to do but resign oneself to one's fate, and make the best preparations for one's personal comfort possible under the circumstances.

I tried the stool—the top was about nine inches wide and eight long—the result was not encouraging. However, *faute de mieux*, I folded up my rug, put that on the top, and balancing my back against the wall, made sitting, if not an unalloyed pleasure, at all events a possibility.

Having luckily that week's *World* in my pocket, I set to work to make out the acrostic ; but it being one of Monsieur l'Abbé's, my progress was exceedingly slow, and the time passed pretty quickly.

I had been here some hour and a half, when I heard the door being unlocked, and a warder



entered, bringing three-quarters of a pint of gruel and six ounces of brown bread.

“I don’t suppose you’ll make much of a hand of this,” he said; “but this is all the supper you are allowed,” and plumping down the tin pint pot containing the gruel on to the table, he departed.

I gazed for a few moments at this sumptuous repast, and with some little hesitation plunged the wooden spoon into the gruel. I found it to be apparently very weak stirabout: not so very nasty to taste, but perfectly useless for sustaining life. The bread was seemingly made of bran and sawdust, and was decidedly bad. Luckily I had brought in some food with me, so had not to depend on the viands supplied by her Majesty’s government.

Slowly time dragged along, and it must have been about half-past seven, when I again heard the key at the door, and a second afterwards Old Bob came snorting into the cell, followed by a tall, goodnatured-looking man in plain clothes.

“The doctor to make his inspection,” said Old Bob, and I looked at the new comer with some curiosity.

“Well,” he said, “how are you? I am obliged to examine everybody on admission.

You have no infectious disease about you, I presume ? ”

“ No,” I said ; I had nothing the matter with me, and the only chronic complaint was heart disease.

“ Ah ! to be sure,” he said. “ Just open your waistcoat, and let me listen to the action of the heart a minute.”

That operation over, he said,—

“ Oh yes, quite so ; to be sure—to be sure. If you are troubled with this while here, let me know, and I will send you up something for it.”

“ Thank you,” I said ; and he and his satellite Bob disappeared.

Again I was left alone, but only for a short time, as Bob soon reappeared and told me to take up my traps, as I should have to go into the main body of the prison, and take up my abode in the cells allotted for the use of prisoners awaiting trial.

Picking up my rug, ulster, and other belongings, I followed Old Bob out into the corridor, through a low arched passage, closed at either end by strong iron doors, and found myself in a kind of open hall, with a large letter D painted on the wall facing me, and a row of iron doors on each side.

This I afterwards learnt was the D corridor, and only used for men sentenced to simple imprisonment, and contained five cells on either side. Out of these ten cells, however, three were filled up with looms for making mats, leaving the remaining seven for prisoners. This was found amply sufficient, as it is rarely that men are sentenced to imprisonment only. Bob was the officer of this ward, and a pretty rough time of it the unfortunate wretches had with him.

Turning round to the right, Bob conducted me up a flight of stone steps, and at the top I found myself in what appeared to me the prison proper.

A long, narrow building, with a slate floor and a monotonous row of doors on each side all duly numbered, and a huge letter C painted on the wall facing me, met my somewhat astonished gaze.

Above my head, at a height of perhaps fourteen feet, a narrow iron landing ran completely round the building, and on to this landing the cell doors of the upper corridor, B, opened. At about the same height above B was situated another railed landing, lettered A, and it was in this topmost corridor I afterwards found my cell was situated.

A large arched skylight ran the whole length of the roof, and admitted ample light; but from the close, disagreeable smell, it at once struck me that the ventilation was deficient, and that I was right in my conjecture I had afterwards abundant proof.

A broad strip of cocoa-nut matting ran all along outside the cell doors, enabling the warders to walk without being heard, and thus giving them ample opportunity of bowling out any prisoner who was idle or playing any tricks in his cell.

Up a flight of stone steps past corridor B, and then surmounting still another flight of steps, I found myself in corridor A. Passing quickly along the right-hand side, Old Bob led the way to the further end, and finally stopped before cell No. 5 A.

"Here you are," he said; "the warder on duty will be round directly, and show you about the hammock. You'll find some rules on the table."

Puffing and blowing, off he went, banging the door to as he left. I looked with some anxiety to see what sort of prospect I had for passing a comfortable night. I found my new quarters the exact counterpart of those I had left, only being at the top of the prison there was a little

more light. On the table, too, I found a Bible, a Prayer Book, Hymns Ancient and Modern, and a Manual of Private Devotion ; also a copy of the rules and regulations for unconvicted prisoners, and dietary for the same.

I immediately began to study the rules, in order to form some idea of what my position actually was. I unfortunately neglected to take a copy of these rules, so can only set down what I remember of them.

1. Men waiting trial were to be quiet and orderly, and obey orders. 2. Were to be supplied with pens, ink, and paper, to enable them to communicate with their friends, or draw up instructions for their solicitors. 3. Were to be allowed to see their friends or their solicitors between the hours of ten and twelve and two and four ; the interview to take place in the presence of an official of the prison, though, in the case of the solicitors, the official was to be out of earshot if required. To be allowed to hand papers containing instructions for their defence direct to their solicitor ; in any other case all papers given or received by a prisoner awaiting trial to be read by the authorities of the prison. 4. A prisoner might, on the payment of two-and-sixpence per week, be provided with a private furnished room, and, at his own expense,

place such further furniture as the governor should consider necessary to his previous position in life. 5. Might also, if he objected to clean his own cell or room, have such menial work performed by a convicted prisoner on the payment of sixpence a day to such prisoner. 6. Might provide his own food, but was not to consume more than one pint of malt liquor or half a pint of wine per diem.

I was much cheered at the prospect of being able to get a room for myself and learning that I could buy my own food, and determined to make an application to be allowed to do so the next day. I then examined the dietary, and thanked my stars I could buy my own food. I brought away a copy of the dietary, and if any of my readers like to try it for a week they will know what real hunger means long before the week is out.

#### DIETARY FOR PRISONERS WAITING TRIAL.

##### *Breakfast.*

|                           |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Bread 6 ozs.              | } Daily. |
| Gruel 1 pint, or          |          |
| Cocoa $\frac{1}{2}$ pint. |          |

##### *Dinner.*

|                     |                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bread 4 ozs.        | } Sunday<br>and<br>Wednesday. |
| Potatoes 6 ozs.     |                               |
| Suet pudding 6 ozs. |                               |

|                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Bread 6 ozs.       | } Monday<br>and<br>Friday. |
| Potatoes 8 ozs.    |                            |
| Cooked Beef 3 ozs. |                            |

|                         |   |               |
|-------------------------|---|---------------|
| Bread 6 ozs.            | } | Tuesday,      |
| Potatoes 6 ozs.         |   | Thursday, and |
| Soup $\frac{3}{4}$ pint |   | Saturday.     |

*Supper.*

|                          |   |        |
|--------------------------|---|--------|
| Bread 6 ozs.             | } | Daily. |
| Gruel 1 pint, or         |   |        |
| Cocoa $\frac{1}{2}$ pint |   |        |

N.B.—The pint of gruel to contain 1 oz. of oatmeal.

N.B.—On Monday  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz. of fat bacon and 7 ozs. of beans are issued in lieu of 3 ozs. of cooked beef.

This dietary has an imposing appearance on paper, but let anybody try it. Eight ounces of potatoes sounds quite a quantity, but really represents two ordinary-sized potatoes; and when you bear in mind that they are served in their skins, and generally have a fair quantity of mud sticking to them, it will be seen that there is not a very big meal left.

Six ounces of bread represents a small roll about half the size of an ordinary French roll, and made chiefly of bran, sharps, and beans; tastes more like sawdust than anything else, and being usually only about half baked, is one of the nastiest compounds imaginable. A piece of bacon half the size of your thumb and a handful of beans is not a very extensive dinner to set before a hungry man.

The present dietary for men waiting trial is to my mind a great scandal. Men are committed on the flimsiest kind of evidence, by some wise-

acre of a justice, with perhaps nearly three months to wait before the next quarter sessions take place, and at the end are frequently acquitted. A man certainly has a very good and just cause of complaint under these circumstances. His health naturally suffers from the confinement; and when, in addition, he is weakened by utterly insufficient food, he is quite unfit to resume work on obtaining his freedom.

Surely a man who, in the eyes of the law, is an innocent man, has a right to be as well fed as a convicted criminal; yet the fourth class diet supplied to the latter is infinitely better, as will be seen hereafter by comparing the dietaries.

While still pondering over the food, I heard a bell commence to ring in the lower corridor, and a few moments after it had ceased my door opened, and a warder entered and told me that it was the bell for the men to go to bed; it being now 8 o'clock, and that at 8.30 the gas would be put out. He then asked me if I knew how to arrange my hammock, and I said no; I had not the slightest notion.

"Well," he said, "if you take it down off the shelf I will show you how it's done."

I lifted down the hammock, which was neatly



strapped up into a compact round bundle, with the mattress and bed-clothes in the middle, unbuckled the strap, and let the hammock unroll itself on the floor.

“Now,” said the warder, “put a strap through the iron hook in the wall and then through the leather eyehole of the hammock; and now this strap through the other hook and eyehole; now pull them up tight and buckle them; do the same with the other end; and remember, the tighter you pull your hammock, the more comfortable it will be.”

It certainly did look as if it wanted a tremendous lot of doing-to in order to make it comfortable, and I began to wonder whether I should ever be able to stop in it long enough to know whether it was comfortable or not; for the hammock was only some eighteen inches wide. The mattress was about two inches thick, the pillow about as large as a good-sized penny roll, the sheets clean but rough, and marked all over with the broad arrow, the blankets good, and an elaborate counterpane in blue and yellow, with Xshire County Prison painted in huge black letters on it.

Having seen me thus far through my difficulties, the warder departed, telling me that the gas was turned off from the outside, *so not*

*to blow it out*—a very necessary caution in some cases.

I made the bed, or rather hammock, as well as I could, and having undressed, proceeded to insinuate myself into it. I say insinuate advisedly, for the bed it made was so exceedingly narrow that it was more like sliding oneself into a tube than anything else. I managed it, however, in time, and never in my life before had so thoroughly realized what feeling like a trussed fowl meant. There are people who like hammocks? I have heard a worthy, though somewhat idiotic old visiting justice, go into ecstasies over the comfort of these very prison hammocks. I can only say I consider them a snare and a delusion, and I fancy if the old gentleman in question had had to sleep in one for a week, he would have altered his opinion. If you lie on your side and attempt to draw up your legs, your knees go out one side and your feet the other ; indeed, lying on your side at all is a difficult feat, and only to be indulged in for a very few moments at a time, as the hammock is so exceedingly concave that the sensation is far more peculiar than pleasant, and entails the necessity of supporting the body by the heels and the head. I will not, however, abuse the

hammock system any longer, as Government has decided to do away with them, and has introduced a still more uncomfortable, though, I fancy, more wholesome bed. I shall reserve my comments on this new idea in beds for a future occasion.

I had no sooner got into my hammock than out went the gas, and thump, thump! went somebody against the door, nearly startling me out of bed. I afterwards discovered that these blows on the doors were part of the Government regulations to enable the locking-up warder to be certain that each door and trap is duly locked. The various precautions they take are tremendous, and quite too elaborate. When the bell rings for bed, the warder goes round, opens each trap-door, and takes out all tools that the men are working with and lays them down outside the door, then claps-to the trap, which shuts with a spring, taking care to see that it has duly caught. He then proceeds to double lock each door, and on his way back looks through each spy-hole to see that the man is in bed, turns off the gas, and tries both door and trap again.

One would really think that this was sufficient, but Government thinks otherwise; and at ten o'clock, just as the prisoners, tired with

a long day's work, have got into their first sleep, the night watchman, who comes on duty at that hour, goes round thumping every door once more.

My first night in a hammock seemed like a long nightmare; but I got through it somehow or the other, and at six o'clock in the morning, boom! went the big bell of the prison, and five minutes afterwards, click went the trap-door, and a hand appeared thrust through the aperture with a wooden stick and a piece of candle stuck at the end. "Light the gas," said a gruff voice; and more than half asleep, by some wonderful good luck, I landed on to my feet, seized the candle, lighted the gas, and passed it out again. Goodness, how cold the bare slates were to one's feet; and I quickly pulled on socks and boots, and sat down to try and collect my scattered thoughts.

Some five minutes later my door was unlocked, and a warder whom I had not seen before came grumbling in. He was a short, broad-built, young-looking man, with a long brown beard and prize-fighting kind of nose, and a curious dissatisfied, wretched look about his face.

I afterwards discovered that Johns' face was a pretty fair index of his mind.

“Now, why isn’t your hammock rolled up and on the shelf?” he began. “And, there now, not even the floor swept.”

I looked my man carefully over, and came to the conclusion that I must face him at once, and so coolly replied,—

“I know nothing about hammocks, and am entitled to have a man to do the work for me by paying the regulation sum; so you can send a man to do it at once.”

He looked at me surlily for a few seconds; but I looked him straight in the eyes, and, with a short, harsh laugh, he turned on his heel, saying,—

“Very well, if you are going to pay, I will get a man; but I am the officer of the corridor, and must have orders from the governor, so you had better speak to him as he goes his rounds this morning.” Putting his head out of the door, he called out, “No. 7.”

“Yes, sir,” replied a voice that was quickly followed by the person of the speaker, and convicted prisoner No. 7 C entered my cell.

I stared at the fellow in silent astonishment, and his get up was enough to make anybody stare. He was a pale, unhealthy-looking lad, apparently eighteen or nineteen years of age, blind of one eye and with a peculiarly villainous

twinkle in the other. He could not, even in decent clothes, have been considered of prepossessing appearance, even by his best friend, so imagine what he looked like clad in a combination of bright scarlet and grey : one side of his waistcoat scarlet, the other grey, the back alternating in the same brilliant hues. Just fancy the appearance of trousers made in this way, and the effect heightened by having Xshire County Prison painted in great white letters over the back of them.

“Roll up this hammock and brush out the cell,” said Johns to No. 7, and then leant against the door in gloomy silence until the work was completed. This did not take No. 7 long. He seized the counterpane, folded it in a particular long fold, laid it on the hammock, and quickly folding the sheets and blankets in the same way, placed them one on the top of the other, with the pillow in the middle, took two of the straps, buckled them together, laid them on the floor, placed the remaining straps on the bed-clothes, pulled the hammock round towards the door, spit on his hands, rushed at the top of the hammock, seized it with both hands, gave a sudden, sharp turn, which rolled the top of the hammock up like a bolster, placed his knee upon this and pressed his whole

weight upon it for a moment, and then rolled the rest of the hammock and its contents round the nucleus thus formed, strapped it round with the straps, and plumped it up on its shelf, in a quarter of the time it takes me to tell how it was done. Having swept out my cell, Johns and his motley attendant left me, and I began to see what prospects I had of washing myself. A copper basin about the size of a soup plate, but deeper, a piece of soap about one inch long, half an inch broad, and a quarter of an inch thick, and a small, rough white towel, with the usual Xshire County Prison in black letters upon it, completed the Government facilities for making one's toilet.

There was a tap of water over the closet, and having filled my basin, the next difficulty was to know where to place it. Washband-stand of course there was none, and the basin being perfectly round at the bottom, the problem was rather a difficult one; but I managed at last to prop it up on the table by the aid of my hair brushes. I was afterwards shown that the basin was made to fit the seat of the closet, and told that that was the regulation place for it, but such a brilliant idea as this had of course not previously entered my head. Before I had got through my dressing the trap-door was



once more dashed down, and my tin, containing my breakfast of gruel and bread, laid on it.

“Look sharp! take in your breakfast.” And I had no sooner got hold of the tin, preparatory to drawing it in, than slam up went the trap-door, nearly sending the contents of the tin all over me. I had still some of the food left that I had brought in with me, so I didn’t get through much of my regulation breakfast, the bread being infinitesimal in quantity and exceedingly bad in quality. At 8.30 the empty tins are collected, so as to be sent down to the kitchen for dinner. I had duly handed out my tin and was sitting reading, when I heard a tremendous shutting of doors. Door after door was banged to, and I began to wonder what on earth was the matter, when my own was flung open, and the warder of the corridor shouted out, “The Governor!” and a second after a little fat fellow in plain clothes came strutting past the open door with his hands stuck in a *negligé* manner in the side pockets of his shooting-jacket. “Take that—ah—hat—ah—down!” he said, and then passed on with his head in the air. (I had hung my hat on the gas burner.)

The chief warder followed with a huge bunch of keys and extensive uniform of dark blue, frogged with broad military braid, and a gold-



banded cap. "Don't you want to speak to the governor?" he said to me.

"Yes," I said, "but I had no time."

The chief warder stepped after his small superior, and in a few moments the little man reappeared, and stood himself in my doorway with his hands stuffed up his coat-sleeves, as if he was accustomed to use a muff. He was fat—very fat, with an old-fashioned Dundreary arrangement of whiskers and moustache, rapidly turning white, and a pair of wonderfully big chestnut-brown eyes, with which he blinked and stared at one exactly like a barn owl.

"I want to know if I can have a separate room in accordance with the regulations for unconvicted prisoners," I said, "and whether I can find my own food?"

"Hum!" he said; "I have no regular rooms, but I will see what can be done, and let you know presently."

"Thank you," I said; and the little fellow strutted off once more. He was an extraordinary little fellow altogether, and very fond of talking about "When he was in the service." He liked also to be called Major ——, and not "Governor," as I believe strict gaol etiquette requires, and was extremely punctilious about being duly saluted and bowed and scraped to generally.

The chief warder came to my cell during the morning, and said the governor would see me about the application I had made, and I was to follow him down to the governor's private office. Down the stone steps I went to corridor C, turned to the right through a half-glass door, and found myself in a long passage, having on either side quite civilized-looking doors with brass handles, so I guessed at once that I was in the offices of the prison. Down to the end of this passage, and the chief warder knocked at a door, and I once more found myself face to face with the presiding genius of the place. It was a comfortably-furnished, light office, with a large raised desk in the centre, at which the little man stood writing as we entered.

"I have been considering your application," he said, "and looking up the regulations on the matter. I shall be willing to accede to your application as far as I can; but we have no rooms provided for prisoners wishing to pay for them, so all I can do is to give you a room in the hospital which is now empty, if you like to take that."

I said, "Yes, I would like it," as it struck me any change must be an improvement upon my present accommodation.

“I find, however,” continued the governor, “that you must have the permission of a visiting justice before I can allow you to be moved from your present cell, and as the ordinary visit of the committee will not take place for a fortnight, I will send round to a member of the visiting committee and ask him to come up to the prison to-morrow, and you can then repeat your request to him, and we can get the matter settled.”

“Thank you,” I said, “and I should like to know also if I can exercise alone, as I see it stated in the rules that I may do so with the consent of the governor.” He looked at the chief warder, and the chief looked at him, and finally he said, “Well, yes, I will see what arrangements can be made.”

It was very fortunate I thought of making this request, for I afterwards found out that the exercising of the men awaiting trial was miserably managed, and consisted of a daily march of from a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes round the wretched little airing-ground, each man being required to keep a distance of six yards from the man in front of him. In fact, all the arrangements for unconvicted men were infinitely worse than for the duly convicted prisoners. Taking into consideration that about

twenty per cent. of the men sent for trial are acquitted, this is exceedingly hard lines on that twenty per cent.

Whilst I have been indulging in this digression, I have been duly bowed out of the governor's office and back again once more to my narrow quarters. About eleven o'clock Johns came and opened my door, and told me that I was to come and exercise; and, following him down the steps, I passed through an iron-plated door, then through an iron gate past another door, and finally found myself on a grass plot about thirty-five yards long and fourteen broad, with an asphalte path all round it. Grey stone walls some thirty feet high encircled this cheerful promenade, and the only relief to one's eyes was, that at the further end you could see the gardens of the warders, which was a most pleasing break from the dull monotony of grey wall. Johns proceeded to march up and down a flagged path laid across the centre of the grass plot, informing me that I might walk round the path or up and down the grass, whichever suited me best, but that I must not speak to him, as that was against the regulations.

In about a quarter of an hour Johns told me it was time to go in, as he had work to do; so

up I went to my cell again, looking at the various cell doors as I passed with curiosity. Each door had a card fitted into a little tin frame in the centre of the door, containing the prisoner's name, age, trade, and religion, and sentence; and above it a larger card, showing what work he was employed on, and the number of marks he had earned since his conviction. My dinner to-day consisted of three-quarters of a pint of a thick kind of pea soup with one small lump of fat and several strips of cabbage leaf floating about in it (it was not so nasty as it looked, and I managed to eat some of it); six ounces of potatoes, consisting of one fair-sized potato and a half, and a tiny roll of sawdust bread. The soup was served in a small circular pint tin, and this was covered by a larger oblong-shaped tin, which fitted down into it, keeping the soup hot and preventing it being spilled—the upper tin serving also as a receptacle for the potatoes and bread. I had read my paper through and through, and was considering what on earth I could do to kill the time, when my door was jumped open in the usual sudden manner, and the warder said, "The chaplain come to visit you."

I got up, and as I did so the chaplain entered. He was a short, slight, gentlemanly-

looking man, apparently between fifty and sixty years of age, his clean-shaved, deeply-lined face giving him a priestly and at first sight rather unpleasant appearance ; but when one had time to study his face a little, and saw the kind, earnest eye, and the broad, clever forehead, and felt all the fascination of the sweet smile that would at times play round the mobile mouth and light up the whole face, all idea of its being a disagreeable countenance quickly passed away, and one felt irresistibly drawn to this good old man. And he was in every sense of the word a good man, far older than he appeared (he was, I believe, over seventy), with twenty-five years' experience of prisons and prisoners, and, what was of far greater importance, a thorough knowledge of the world. Many a man looks back with heart-felt gratitude to the kindly, earnest sympathy of the good old chaplain. An extremely high churchman, he had the misfortune to be placed where Dissent was rife, and the majority of the civil prisoners Nonconformists of some sect or the other ; the consequence being that he was far too much inclined to preach up forms and ceremonies than simple faith in Christ—Dissent being to him like a red rag to a bull. It was the one great mistake he made, and caused

many to pay far less attention to his teaching and advice than they otherwise would have done. He had also an unhappy knack of thinking that every prisoner committed for trial was guilty of the offence with which he was charged; and I well remember how on his first visit to me he stirred up everything that was bad in my nature, and left me thoroughly irritated and annoyed with him and everybody else, kind and courteous though he was in everything that he said and did during the interview. I mention this as it was the first and last time that the chaplain ever did annoy me. In all his future visits he cheered and helped me more than words can tell, and I consider it a great proof of his wonderful knowledge of character and fitness for his post that this should have been the case. He came into my cell with a quick, nervous step, and, prison-cell though it was, doffed his hat with a quiet, unostentatious courtesy that I thoroughly appreciated.

“I have to visit all persons sent here for trial,” he said. “I regret exceedingly to see a man in your position in such a place as this.”

As he said this, he laid a large book on my little table, and producing a pen and ink, informed me that he should have to trouble me



to tell him my Christian name, age, profession, &c., in fact, all information that I had already supplied to "Old Bob," as the Government, for some unknown reason, requires the chaplain to keep this special register, and obtain all this information for himself, when, if the necessary orders were only given, it might all be obtained from the prison register and copied in for the chaplain by the schoolmaster. This would be in every respect a far better arrangement, as the chaplain would then know before going to visit a man something of his past life, and be able to consider what line of argument to use with him. A prison chaplain has a great deal to do, and if he does his work conscientiously, more even than he can well make time for ; and this, I believe, is the principal reason why the commissioners insist upon the chaplains keeping these registers for themselves, for it is a well-known fact that the more a man has to do in the prison service the more he will be given to do.

Our interview lasted some twenty minutes, and, before leaving, the chaplain informed me that I was entitled to the use of any books in the prison library, and promised to send me up the catalogue, so that I might choose what books I should like. "You will, however," he



continued, "find our library a very, very poor one, and I am afraid it mostly consists of elementary reading-books and childish stories, but if there are any books in my private library that you would like to have, I shall be happy to lend them to you."

I thanked him heartily for this offer, and after a few more earnest, kindly words, he left, and I was once more thrown upon my own resources. The chaplain was as good as his word, and shortly after his departure, a warder arrived with the catalogue of library books, and told me that if I would put a pencil mark against the names of the books I should like to have, the chaplain would see they were sent up to me. I soon found that the chaplain's description of the library was, alas! too true, the whole library consisting only of some hundred and twenty volumes, and far the greater number of these were the most awful rubbish. The only readable books in it seemed to be the *People's Magazine* (four volumes), White's "Natural History of Selbourne," Paley's "Christian Evidences," "Robinson Crusoe," Lord's "Physiology," and three or four elementary scientific works by Tomlinson. However, it was Hobson's choice, and the only thing was to get what I could out of what there was. I even-

tually obtained a volume of the *People's Magazine*, and so got on pretty well, as I found it contained a good deal of interesting reading and a clever serial story. It seemed to me to be admirably suited for a prison library, as it was evidently written with the view of better educating the middle and lower classes ; but it was not, I believe, sufficiently High Church in its views to suit the chaplain, and he would not allow any more volumes to be added to the library. They were really the only readable books in the library, and I afterwards discovered that they were in tremendous request, convicted prisoners having to ask the schoolmaster (whose duty it was to distribute the books) some two months in advance if they wished to obtain one of them. Bedtime came again at last, and I had once more to brave the perils of my hammock ; but I managed to get into it somehow or the other, and, what was still more wonderful, managed to stick in it until the next morning.

When the governor went his rounds next morning I asked him if I could have my hammock on the floor. He hummed and hawed as usual, and looked at the chief warder, and having, I suppose, gained some inspiration from that official's cute and crafty northern

face, informed me that “He would think about it.”

These thoughts eventually resulted in an iron bedstead being brought into my cell in the course of the morning; and this was a decided improvement, as I now had something to sit upon during the day. It is true that when I went to bed that night I found it to be slightly more uncomfortable than the hammock; but then it was considerably safer. It was one of those iron bedsteads that close up, so as to allow of their being easily moved from place to place; but from a long course of moving the middle hinge of this delectable bedstead had become permanently injured, and stuck itself up in one long, unbending ridge, right across the centre of the bed. The result of this was that one might almost as well have hung one's self up on the top of a clothes-horse and tried to go to sleep. I managed, however, with the help of my clothes and rug, to pad this abrupt mountain ridge into a kind of swelling hill, and laid myself out on the top of it with some chance of getting a little sleep, but exceedingly small chance of any comfort.

“Habit's second nature,” they say; and certainly, after a few nights' practice, I got quite accustomed to hanging myself up at bed-

time, and managed to sleep pretty soundly. At twenty minutes past eleven in the morning the bell used to ring for chapel, and at about twenty minutes to twelve I used to be marshalled in. This difference in time resulted from the fact that trial men go into the chapel last, so as to avoid their being seen or seeing convicted prisoners. They come out of chapel first for the same reason, and are consequently safely inside their cells before the convicted prisoners commence to leave their boxes.

The chapel was arranged in rows of upright coffins (no other word will so well convey an idea of their appearance to the reader), each tier raised some two feet higher than the one in front, like the pit of a theatre, thus allowing the prisoners to see the chaplain, governor, and chief warder, who were placed in a sort of gallery facing them, but quite preventing their seeing each other, or indeed looking anywhere but straight to their front. The coffin-like receptacles opened at the back, and were each fitted with a spring lock, so that as soon as the prisoner entered the warder snapped the door after him, and there was no possibility of the man's getting out until the officer came along and unlocked the door for him. To make things doubly sure there was a patent arrange-

ment which enabled the warder, as soon as a whole row was full, to bolt all the doors at the bottom by turning an iron handle at the end of the row. Each door had a narrow plank about six inches broad fastened to it in such a manner that it sloped downwards at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and this was called the seat. Possibility of sitting upon it there was none; the only thing you could do was to lean against it, and you could only do this by planting your feet in the two front corners of the box and thus levering yourself, as it were, against the back. Kneeling was completely out of the question, really impossible, and so narrow were these hideous monstrosities that a fairly broad-shouldered man had some considerable difficulty, when standing upright, in getting his arms up from his sides in order to take his Prayer Book off the ledge provided for it. Here one was wedged in on all sides, with simply a square hole in front some foot and a half square, through which one could see the chaplain and the governor, and in this state of great personal discomfort expected to give one's attention and thoughts to the praise of God.

The gallery where the chaplain and governor sat ran the whole length of the chapel, and was divided by pillars into three compartments—

that to the right of the chaplain being for the governor's family, and the one to the left for the organ. On the left side also sat the matron in an elaborate horsehair chair, screened off from the sight of the men by a skilful arrangement of curtains. The governor's pew was also curtained the whole length of the front, so that one only saw his family coming in and going out.

Down the centre of the chapel ran a high wooden partition dividing off the female portion of the chapel, the interior arrangements being precisely the same as the men's. The service consisted of a portion of the ordinary Morning Service, with a special psalm and the second lesson for the day, and on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Litany.

Across the roof of the chapel from one end to the other ran a railed platform, and on this was placed a warder, who was thus enabled to see exactly what any man was doing, as there were no tops to the coffins below. The whole arrangement was intensely miserable, and the result a blasphemous farce.

During the afternoon I had a call from the visiting justice, and was able to make my application for removal into paid quarters and for permission to buy my own food. The justice, a venerable old gentleman, was exceed-

ingly civil, and at once gave me the required permission. He, like the governor, told me that there were no regular rooms set apart for the purpose at present, but that the governor had shown him a large airy room in the hospital, with a fireplace and all necessary conveniences in it, and he hoped that would suit me, and that I should be comfortable there. He then asked me whether I found the food sufficient, and I said, "Well, I make no complaint; I am only anxious to buy my own provisions, as I am quite unaccustomed to the kind of food I get here."

The old gentleman then departed, and the governor told me he would give the necessary orders for my being moved into my new quarters on the next day. I was exceedingly glad to have the matter so satisfactorily arranged, for the few days I had passed under existing circumstances had already told upon my health, and I was weak and faint from want of proper nourishment, and the close confinement also tells very much upon a man. Men awaiting trial ought to have some adequate amount of exercise, say an hour and a half or two hours a day—the present allowance of from a quarter of an hour to twenty-five minutes is totally insufficient.



The following day I was conducted to my new quarters, and they seemed perfectly luxurious after A No. 5. I had a large square room with a boarded floor and a couple of large windows, and although the view was not extensive or interesting—being confined to a portion of the warder's cabbage gardens on one side, and the warder's quarters on the other—still the fact of being able to see the sky, and know whether it was wet or fine, was in itself a great boon. There was a bed in one corner of the room, a large deal table on the opposite side, and a long wooden garden seat in front of the fireplace. A huge chest containing changes of bed-linen, clean towels, &c., completed the furniture, but then one could not expect very much for half-a-crown a week. There was a good fire burning brightly in the grate, and the whole place was as clean as a new pin. On the left of the passage leading into this room was another smaller room, containing a large sink, water-tap, &c., so that I had quite a suite of apartments. I found also that I was now under the care of another warder, and he was as great an improvement on my last custodian as my rooms were on my previous quarters.

My present warder was a smart, good-looking little man named Piggot; he had been a non-



commissioned officer in the royal artillery, and although a great stickler for discipline and having "everything done according to the rules and regulations," I found him a most good-natured, trustworthy fellow. His proper duty, or rather duties, was to go messages, fetch the letters, look after the debtors, and see that the offices of the governor and chaplain were kept properly clean and tidy; mine, however, being an exceptional case, and as I was now outside the prison proper (my new quarters being over the governor's office), I was handed over to his care, as he had the general superintendence of all this part of the building.

Piggot told me that he had orders from the governor to see what arrangements could be made for having my food sent in, and so he thought the best thing would be to talk the matter over with me, and learn exactly what I wanted.

I explained to him what I should require, and after some conversation we came to the conclusion that the best thing to do would be for me to supply myself with cocoa, tea, bread, butter, and eggs, and with the help of a kettle and saucepan supplied by the authorities, cook my own breakfast and tea, and then have my

dinner sent in at one o'clock from an eating-house that was near. Piggot had been round to ask the necessary questions as to price, &c., and told me that I could have a cut from the joint, with potatoes and other vegetables, for two shillings a day, but that I should have to pay an additional threepence a day for having it carried up to the prison gate. I could also, he informed me, be supplied with cold meat for breakfast at so much the half-pound, all ready cooked, if I preferred that to eggs for supper.

The regulations allowed me a pint of beer or porter, or half a pint of wine per diem, so I decided that bottled Bass would be the best thing to have, as it could be got in by the dozen, and would always be fresh and ready. Ordinary pint bottles invariably hold less than an imperial pint, so, with a little grumbling, I got the governor to say that I might have two pint bottles per day, and thus got a very liberal pint.

It seems an exceedingly idiotic arrangement to tie a man down to one pint a day. A quart of beer or stout could do no one any harm, and would allow a pint for dinner and the same for supper; and if the water is as bad in other prisons as it was here, this could scarcely be

considered an excessive allowance, even by Sir Wilfrid Lawson.

There was, unfortunately, no time to order my dinner for this day, so I had to be content with the regulation allowance of three ounces of very inferior Australian beef, eight ounces of potatoes, and four ounces of bread. Piggot brought me up, however, a plate and a knife and fork, so that was a considerable advance upon my late accommodation of a wooden spoon and one's fingers.

I explained to Piggot how much I suffered from the close confinement, and he gave me a first-rate tip. With a wondrous knowing wink and grave shake of his head, he said,—

“Let me put your name down for the doctor, and then ask him to give you extra exercise; he is a real nice gentleman, and you just speak out plain to him, and he will help you if he can.”

I immediately assented to this proposition, and it bore abundant fruit.

That evening I had the doctor up to see me, and he at once ordered me two hours' exercise a day; and on my telling him how much my nervous system had been affected by the confinement and anxiety, and saying that I had always found “tobacco” a great soother, he at once said,—

“To be sure! to be sure! I’ll make an order for you to have half an ounce of tobacco a day. I won’t,” he continued, “allow men in the prison proper to smoke, because, if I let one man have his pipe, I should be bothered on all sides; but up here it is quite a different thing, and I will make the necessary order.”

This was indeed a blessing, and I thanked my stars on having got placed in my present quarters.

During the afternoon I had a visit from the chaplain, who brought me some books from his private library, and told me to let him know when I required any more. He stayed and chatted with me for some time, and very wisely and kindly he spoke; indeed, the advice he then gave me with regard to my private affairs I found to be of inestimable benefit in the future.

A little before six o’clock Piggot returned, bringing with him a large bag of fresh eggs, a pound of butter, a couple of loaves, a tin of condensed milk, and some sugar, salt, tea, &c.

“Now,” said Piggot, “I should stow some of these things away in the drawer of your table, and the bread, butter, and milk I should keep in the outer room, as it is cooler; in the meantime I will go down and get you a kettle

and saucepan, and a sufficient amount of crockery."

I soon got everything shipshape; and when Piggot returned with the china, and a supply of table-cloths, I felt that I was indeed returning to a state of civilization. I had heard from the governor in the morning that my trial would not take place for three weeks, and it was therefore a matter of great satisfaction to me to think that I should be able to pass that time in some kind of comfort.

Piggot had also managed to get me a fine tin teapot; and while he laid the cloth for me, I filled the kettle, put it on the fire, and prepared to make the tea, and under the instruction of Piggot, put the tea to draw while I boiled my eggs.

Piggot now had to leave, as he had his own tea to get, and the debtors to look after; but he told me he should be back to lock me up at half-past eight, and then, if I thought of anything else I wanted, to let him know, and he would get it for me.

I made a capital tea, and then, with a good fire before me and pleasant books at hand, the time passed quickly away, and Piggot soon came marching upstairs to see that his bird had not flown, and to lock me securely up for the night.

There were two gas-burners in my room, one of which I could turn on or off myself, and the other could only be turned on or off from the staircase outside the room. Piggot informed me that he had orders from the governor to turn the one I called my gas-burner out (that is to say, the one I could manipulate myself), but that the other was to be left lighted all night. This, I presume, was to enable the night watchman to see, when he peeped through the spy hole that was fixed over my door, that I was not making any preparations for an attempted escape, although how on earth I was to get out of my present place of abode, unless I had gone through a course of lessons from Messrs. Maskelyne and Cook, I don't know. It was a great nuisance to have the gas flaring in one's eyes all night, but the governor of a prison is supreme within the prison, and his orders brook no alteration or denial.

Whether it would have in any way prevented my escape had such a thing been at all feasible, or the idea ever entered my head, is however extremely doubtful, for as far as I could make out old Williams, the night watchman, used to come and peep in at me about half-past ten, and then leave me undisturbed till about five o'clock the next morning. I always got timely

notice of his arrival, as the wooden stairs leading up to my room creaked considerably at all times, and with old Williams, who weighed some seventeen or eighteen stone, they played a complete tune. At the foot of my staircase, and just outside the door of the governor's office, stood a tell-tale clock, that was supposed to require Williams's attendance every half-hour or twenty minutes, but from my experience while up here, and the observations I afterwards heard, made by some of the warders, I expect the tell-tale clock like most of the other prison patents, could be manipulated by those who knew the ropes.

At all events, I was one day talking with one of the warders about the night watchman's duties, and saying what a hard billet it must be, when he laughed at me and said, "Law, bless you, he just goes the rounds when first he comes on duty, and then goes off with a bottle of gin into the spare cell kept for him, and goes fast asleep."

"But," I said, "if he were not at the tell-tale clock at the appointed times, the governor would know it in the morning."

The warder looked at me with a pitying smile, and said, "You don't suppose old Williams has been here for the last eighteen years without



learning how to dodge that old clock." My after-experiences certainly gave me a strong suspicion that the warder was about right, and one or two other hints that I afterwards got confirmed my suspicions. But *revenons à nos moutons*. Piggot told me he must now lock me up for the night, but that I need not go to bed at once, unless I chose, though it would be as well for me to have turned in before the night watchman came his rounds. He also told me that he had orders from the governor to let me through to the prison bath-room as soon as I got up, and I should thus be able to get a fine cold bath every morning. "I shall come and call you," he continued, "about a quarter past six, and as soon as you are ready I shall pass you through to the officer of C corridor, and he will pass you on to the bath-room, then while you are bathing my 'cleaner' will make your bed, light your fire, and do up your rooms." I had perhaps better explain here that the cleaner would be a convicted prisoner, each warder having a prisoner allotted to him to do the requisite cleaning in his department; this prisoner would receive the sixpence per day that I had to pay for "attendance." Arrangements for the morrow being thus satisfactorily settled, Piggot left me, and I soon after turned in for the night.

Unfortunately I found that my old friend the mountainous bed had followed my fortunes, and I once more had to set to work to pad and stuff to make it endurable. Seeing that this was one of the hospital beds and that men, at all events in this prison, were never sent into hospital unless they were most dangerously ill, it really was a swindle that such a hideous delusion as this so-called bed should have been tolerated. At six o'clock a.m. the big prison bell used to peal away, warning all warders that lived outside the prison to present themselves at the gates, and as one of my windows was just underneath the belfry I invariably awoke after the first peal or two. Piggot came stamping up the stairs about a quarter past six, and then I used to tumble out, slip on a dressing-suit, lay hold of my sponge and towels, and then trot down the stairs, out into the passage, through the door at the end, and into the C corridor of the prison. The warder's office was at this end of C corridor, and there were sure to be some of them either looking over the night reports or making fresh ones for the morning. For the first two or three mornings I used to say to whichever of them happened to be there, "I am going to have my bath," and the reply used to be, "All right; go to the end of the corridor, then

down the stairs to D corridor, and turn to the right." But after a while I used simply to nod my head, get a nod back, and pass straight on. On my return from the bath-room the same performance was gone through, and I used to proceed up to my rooms to find Piggot putting the finishing touches to my suite of apartments. The bed used to be made, the fire burning, and all I had to do was to put the kettle on, and by the time I had finished dressing the water was boiling away in the most approved fashion. Then I used to get out my store, and arrange my breakfast-table. The china provided was the commonest description of white delf, with a large monogram on each article, in the shape of a broad arrow, surrounded by an elegant black band bearing the motto "H.M. Prison," the food, however, provided by the local shopkeepers was exceedingly good, and tasted none the worse for the china being common. Breakfast over, I used to do whatever writing I had to do in the way of answering letters, writing instructions for my solicitors, &c. At ten o'clock, provided it was fine, Piggot used to come for me, and I was escorted out into the airing-ground for an hour's exercise. Piggot used to look carefully all round the place, so as to see that there were no rope-ladders about, I suppose,

and on finding everything correct used to leave me to get through the hour as best I could. I used to walk round and round the miserable little plot of grass till I was quite giddy, and then stand still and grumble. At last I made myself a set of quoits out of four stones and two pieces of bone, the stones being the quoits and the bones the pegs, and at the end of a fortnight I had become a tremendous swell at this innocent amusement, the only drawback being that there was nobody to admire my skill.

At eleven o'clock Piggot used to come to fetch me in as he then had to go to the post for the letters, and was supposed to see me safely back to my quarters before he started. Twenty minutes past eleven brought chapel time, and then either old Bob or the miller warder Humphrey used to come to pass me through to my chapel cage. I had to come into chapel by the same door as the debtors, and on the opposite side of the chapel to that connected with the regular prison, and consequently got a good view of all the arrangements. To the right of the door at which I entered, and exactly under the chaplain's gallery stood the Communion Table; to the left was an elaborate kind of Glastonbury chair, faced by a Prie-Dieu, for the use of the schoolmaster, who acted as

clerk, and in front of the Communion Table was arranged a semi-circular seat for the use of the debtors. This seat had a high baize screen running the entire length of the back, thus completely concealing the debtors from the eyes of the convicted prisoners, and preventing the debtors turning round to stare at the prisoners. The rest of the chapel was arranged as I have already described in rows of boxes ; the unconvicted prisoners sitting in the last row of all at the extreme back. On weekdays the service was over in about ten minutes, but as I used to be let out last it was nearly twelve o'clock before I got back to my apartments. I now used to finish my letter-writing and whatever other writing I had to do, then clear away my writing materials and lay the table for dinner. At one o'clock Piggot would arrive with my dinner in a vegetable dish, carefully tied up in an elegant scarlet handkerchief ; but if it was roughly served, the meat and vegetables were first-rate, and capitally cooked. Bread, cheese, and my two bottles of Bass completed my midday meal. The following hour I used to devote to smoking and reading, and at three o'clock Piggot would come and fetch me for my second hour's exercise. My afternoon exercise used occasionally to be varied by a short conversation

with Humphrey, the miller warder, and as he had been over five-and-twenty years in the prison I was able to pick up a good deal of useful information from him. He was the miller and manager of the flour-mill that was worked by the tread-wheel, and here all the flour was ground for the use of the prison, and also for the County Lunatic Asylum. He was a fine-looking man, with an eye like a hawk, and the curiosity of half a dozen old maids. The moment a man arrived in the prison, Humphrey would be off to his cell and put him through a cross-examination that would have done credit to an Old Bailey barrister. He would not rest until he felt satisfied that he had got all the information that was to be had, and the persistent way in which he used to come and try and pump me whenever he had ten minutes to spare used to make me laugh more than enough. I was always glad, though, to see his good-humoured face appearing on the scene, for he had a wonderful collection of village anecdotes, and told them with the local phraseology and accent which made them very amusing to a stranger. He was also tooth-drawer to the establishment, and had some marvellous stories of his operations in this line. He really was, I believe, a first-rate performer

and I myself saw him take out a large double tooth for a prisoner (indeed I acted assistant dentist, and held the man's head), and he certainly performed the operation with neatness and despatch. At four o'clock Piggot used to reconduct me to my room, and then I had to amuse myself as best I could until tea-time. This meal I generally took about half-past six, and I then used to smoke and read until Piggot arrived at half-past eight to see me safe for the night and lock me in. If he had a few minutes to spare he would sit down and tell me some of his adventures whilst serving in the army, and many a hearty laugh I have had at some of his stories. We very soon became great friends, but try as I would I never could get any information about the prison out of him. The moment I started a leading question he would shut up like an oyster, and all I could get from him would be, "Duty is duty, sir, and regulations is regulations; it's against both to speak of prison affairs to anybody in here." Piggot gone, I used to seek my mountainous couch, and would lie reading till I fell asleep. Thus the days slipped rapidly away, the same daily routine only broken by an occasional visit from the chaplain or my solicitor. The latter's visits I greatly looked forward to, as he was allowed to see me alone



and my friends used to send all their important letters to his office, and he used to bring them with him and give them to me, while I in turn used to hand to him the letters I wanted sent to my friends. I thus got all the information I required entirely unknown to the prison authorities, and it was a great advantage to me, and I looked forward to my solicitor's visits with the greatest eagerness. When his bill of costs came in though, and I saw the price he charged for this accommodation, I did not like it half so much.

The chaplain frequently visited me during the three weeks I passed here, and long and seriously did the good old man speak to me on more than one occasion, and it is with deep and earnest gratitude that I look back and remember his many kindnesses.

Sometimes the governor would slip up to my room, and give me himself a letter that might have come from some member of my family, and for this I was very grateful, as, had the ordinary routine been followed, and the letter handed by the governor to the clerk, from clerk to the chief warder, and from the chief warder to Piggot, each of them would carefully have read it before passing it on.

I also had a visit from the committing magistrate, who had started a correspondence

with my friends (why or wherefore I never could make out, unless it was from an innate love of gossip), and who came to inquire how I was, and whether I was comfortable. I thought it rather a curious proceeding on his part, but I concluded that he was more kind-hearted than wise, and was proportionately grateful; but when I afterwards discovered that he had taken the trouble to collect all the idle gossip about my case, and forward it to my friends, I came to a different conclusion. And yet it is scarcely fair to call him malicious, for I really believe that it was done out of a pure and an unfortunate love of gossip.

During my stay Quarter Sessions also came off, and everybody was very busy for the two days that they lasted, as the governor, clerk, and two warders had to be down in the courthouse all day, and that left them very short-handed at the prison.

I had also the inspector of prisons for this district, Captain L——, up to see me on his monthly visit. He was attended by the chief warder and an under-warder, and simply marched into my room and said, "Have you any complaints to make?" and walked out again, so I did not see much of him.

On another occasion I had a call from a

member of the visiting committee. This committee is formed of a certain number of county magistrates, whose duty it is to come to the prison on the second Tuesday in every month, for the purpose of inspecting the interior of the prison and listening to any complaints that prisoners may have to make. They also have power to order a prisoner to be flogged, in event of his having been guilty of any gross breach of discipline.

I was laying on my bed, smoking, when my door opened and the chief warder ushered in a fine-looking old gentleman, with an unmistakable military swing about his walk.

"How do you do, sir? how are you?" he said, addressing himself to me, and I tumbled off my bed, wondering who on earth he could be.

I suppose he saw by my face that I was rather puzzled, and hastened to inform me that he was the chairman of the visiting committee, and had come up to know if I had any complaint to make.

I told him no, that I was as comfortable as could be expected under the circumstances.

"Ah," he said, "I am very glad to hear it, and I hope you will get out of your difficulties all right. Good-day, sir, good-day."

And off he went, leaving me much amused and quite cheered by the sight of his jolly, good-natured old face.

A fortnight soon slipped away, and one Tuesday morning the governor had me down to his office, and told me that he should have to send me up to Z—— Prison on the following Saturday, there to await my trial at the forthcoming Assizes, which would commence the following Monday. I was naturally extremely anxious to find out all I could about Z—— Prison, but found that very little was known about the present condition of the prison. Our chief warder, Watergate, had held the same position there for some years, and Piggot advised me to get hold of him the first opportunity I had, and ask him how I had best manage.

Watergate, however, had a great deal to do, and I did not manage to come across him for a few days, and when I did the small amount of information I could gather from him was not reassuring, being chiefly confined to “Well, I expect you’ll have to make up your mind to rough it while you are there.”

I learnt from other sources that Z—— Prison, while it was in the hands of the county authorities, was about as bad as it could be ; in

fact, the way it was managed was, I understand, a disgrace to any civilized country. Now, however, that the prison had come into the hands of the Government, a fresh governor had been appointed, and a large number of new officers, and it was hoped that things were now a little better managed.

The few remaining days slipped rapidly away, and on Friday afternoon the chaplain came to pay me a farewell visit. Long and earnestly did the good old man speak to me, and most kindly did he wish me safely through the coming ordeal, and it was with a softened heart and choking voice that I thanked him for his many kindnesses to me, and wrung his parting hand.

Later on in the afternoon I had a call from Old Bob, who came up puffing and blowing with a couple of large sheets of foolscap, to make a list of my clothes, and see that the list he had taken on my arrival tallied with the one now made.

“Now,” said Bob, “if you will call out the things to me, I’ll put ’em down.”

I got my things together and commenced calling them out; so many coats, so many waistcoats, &c., but Old Bob cried out,—

“Law a mercy! I can’t go ahead that pace;

just slack off a bit, sir, and let me have a chance to write these here three-decked words."

Poor Old Bob proceeded to place his papers about a yard to his right, tucked up his sleeves, spit on the floor, laid his head down nearly on his left arm, groaned, spit again, and then, with the air of a martyr, moaned out,—

"All ready, sir. Now lay it out easy."

So I started once more. "Three coats."

"Three coats," repeated Old Bob, and then proceeded to spell the word as he wrote it down—"c, o, t, e," went Bob. "Ay, ay, sir."

"Three waistcoats," said I.

"Three w, e, s, t, c, o, t, e, 's," said Bob, the perspiration rolling down his face with the enormous mental exertion; and he laid down his pen, spit on the floor, and mumbled curses on pens, paper, writing, and education in general.

I could not help laughing, Old Bob looked so utterly miserable; but as I did not want to be kept all night over this list of my belongings, I concluded it was better to propose some other arrangement, so I said,—

"Look here, I know exactly what things I have up here; let me fill up the list, and then we can compare it with yours, and see if anything is missing."

“ Ah ! that is more like it,” said old Bob. “ I ain’t much of a scholard, and you’ll soon run it off;” and with a deep sigh of relief he relinquished his place to me, and I soon had the list made out. Comparing it with Bob’s list turned out to be a longer matter, for as his spelling was entirely phonetic it was often a difficult matter to discover whether he and I meant the same article, and I had at last to give him his list and tell him to read it out whilst I ticked off the various items in mine. The job was at last finished and everything found correct, and Bob started off puffing and blowing to make his report to the governor.

All these precautions are taken in order to prevent a prisoner making a present of anything he happened to have with him to any of the warders.

Having got rid of Old Bob, I proceeded to get my tea ready, but long before I had finished Piggot came fussing up with his accounts of the money he had expended for me, and the various bills duly receipted. I told him that I was sure everything was quite correct, but that would not satisfy Piggot, and he insisted upon my examining every item.

He certainly had managed wonderfully well for me, and my weekly expenditure, for every-



thing, was something under twenty-eight shillings a week. This was mainly owing to Piggot's straightforward, honest kindliness in buying everything for me himself, and insisting on the tradespeople letting me have things at the ordinary prices. When I went up to Z—— Prison, and had to let the shopkeepers make their own arrangements, it cost me more than double what it did here.

Having settled our accounts, Piggot proceeded to give me some general advice about the morrow. He said,—

“If you like to authorize me to do so, I will go over to the governor and ask him if I may buy some lunch for you to take with you to-morrow, and a flask of wine, for you won't get up to Z—— much before three o'clock.”

I told him by all means to consider himself fully authorized to ask for anything that would be conducive to my personal comfort.

“You had better get all your things packed to-night,” continued Piggot, “as you will have to leave this at half-past seven to-morrow morning, and there won't be more than time for you to get your bath and breakfast, for you will have to see the governor before you leave.”

“Who is going up with me?” I asked; but

this was demanding information, and Piggot hummed and hawed a good deal, but finally consented to say that he *thought* the chief warder and Humphrey would form the escort.

“At all events,” he continued, “you are going to have a carriage and pair to take you to the station,” and seemed to think that this ought to afford me great consolation. Then, apparently afraid that I should ask him any more questions, he told me that he must be off to the post, but that he would come in at locking-up time and see if I wanted anything more.

I next had a visit from Wigan, the clerk of the prison, who came up to get my receipt for the money that had been expended for me by Piggot, and to tell me that there was a balance of ten shillings in my favour, which would be handed over, by the officer travelling with me, to the governor of Z—— Prison; if, however, I chose to spend any of it on the journey, I had full liberty to do so.

Wigan was a capital, good kind of fellow, but as close as a rock, and you might just as well try to get information out of an oyster as out of him. It was, however, pure accident that he was so well fitted for his post, and the way he got the billet illustrates so capitally the manner in which appointments to the prison

service were made by the county magistrates that I think it is worth chronicling here. Wigan, after receiving a better education than is generally given to boys in his position of life, was apprenticed to a carpenter, and ultimately obtained a situation as ship's carpenter in the royal navy. Not taking kindly to the sea, he threw up this billet, and, returning to his native village, started as carpenter and cabinet-maker there. His father, who was and had been for many years the carpenter and engineer of the prison, died shortly after his son's return, leaving his wife and younger children very badly provided for; and the prison committee of magistrates were asked if they could do anything to assist the unfortunate woman in bringing up her family respectably. The magistrates did not feel inclined to give their money for nothing, and as their present clerk wished to retire they sent for young Wigan, and told him that he should be the new clerk, at a salary of 75*l.* per annum and the various perquisites attached to the office, but on the condition that he was to provide for his widowed mother, and as there was not much to do he would have ample time to work at his trade of an evening.

Wigan mildly suggested that he was a carpenter and not a clerk, but the magistrates

became quite angry with him, and told him that they chose to help his mother in this way, and that he was to become a clerk at once. Of course there was no answering this kind of argument, and young Wigan, having the sense to see that 75*l.* a year and perquisites was far better than nothing, closed with the offer, or rather command, and was duly installed as clerk of the Xshire County Prison.

How such a summary proceeding would have answered in most cases, it is difficult to say, but Wigan luckily wrote an exceedingly good hand and was quick at figures. The governor of the prison at this time also happened to be a man who liked to look into everything himself, and consequently did a considerable part of the office work, and Wigan's father, having served under him for many years, he helped on the son as much as he could. At all events, Wigan got on somehow or the other, and at the time I speak of he had been clerk for several years, and now did the work fairly well.

I had no sooner got rid of Wigan than sundry grunts and growls on the staircase warned me that Bob was on his way up to me again, and a few seconds later he and the doctor entered my room. Bob, I saw, had several printed forms in his hand, and the doctor it

turned out had to fill up these in order to enable my being removed the next day. On one form he had to state whether I had any infectious disorder, skin disease, or anything else peculiarly unpleasant ; on another, exactly what I had got the matter with me, supposing I did happen to have any chronic complaint. Finally he had to fill up another form certifying that I was in a fit state of health to be moved from the one prison to the other. Between whisky on the one side and stupidity on the other they made a pretty job of it, and signed first one form and then another, until I did not know whether I was ill or well. I at last thought it high time to interfere, and as Bob had luckily brought plenty of forms, we soon got things straight, and all the papers *en règle*.

The doctor, notwithstanding his unfortunate failing, was an exceedingly clever man, and had treated me very skilfully while I was under his care, and I now asked him if he would give me the prescription of the medicine he had been giving me, so that I might get it made up at Z——, in case I felt the need of it.

“To be sure, to be sure,” he said, and sat down and managed to write it out for me somehow or other.

He was a most good-hearted, good-natured

man, and wished me good-bye with many hearty expressions of regret at my present unfortunate position, and kindly hopes that I should ultimately be able to clear myself from the charge.

I had barely finished with the doctor when Pigot came to lock me up for the night, and I learned that it was just upon nine o'clock, a fearfully late hour, considering that the prison is supposed to be all locked up at 8.30.

"Well," said Piggot, "here I am at last. I have locked up the debtors, and will try and squeeze out ten minutes to see how you have arranged for to-morrow."

"The fact is, Piggot," said I, "there has been so much to do and so many people here, that I have not had time to do anything, and I must do my packing when you leave me."

"Never mind, you'll get done somehow, and I have everything settled up right for you as far as lays in my power. There," continued Piggot, opening a basket he had with him, "are a packet of sandwiches and a couple of beef pies, and a half-pint flask of port. Port's a fine sustaining thing, and I went down to the head hotel myself and told the young lady in the bar that I was not tied down to price, and wanted a drop of something that was something, and

when you try it for lunch to-morrow I expect you'll find it the real thing."

"Thank you, Piggot; I am very much obliged for all the trouble you have taken. By-the-way, I knew there was something I wanted to ask you: am I supposed to wear handcuffs to-morrow?"

"Oh, yes!" he replied, "at least they always have done, but perhaps they might make a difference this time; at all events, I have known it arranged so that they only wore them on leaving the prison, and as soon as they were outside and in the carriage, had them slipped off."

He gave me a most knowing wink, and I felt pretty sure the question had already been discussed.

"Well, look here," I said, "I don't believe they have any right to handcuff an unconvicted man, and I shall apply to the governor about it before I leave to-morrow morning."

"Oh, yes!" replied Piggot, "you can see what you can do with the governor to-morrow; and at all events you will have two capital fellows going with you, for you'll find the chief a real nice chap once he gets outside. You see he is obliged to be a bit stiff and straight in here, and I have no doubt you can get things comfortably settled."



“ Oh, between you all, I’ll get along somehow or the other. I only hope I shall find things half as pleasant at Z——.”

“ Well, you must do the best you can,” replied Piggot; “ but I am afraid you will have to rough it a bit.”

“ It’s no use looking on the shady side of the hedge, I must make the best of it,” I replied; “ and look here, Piggot, do you get the sixpence a day I have to pay for attendance?”

“ No, I wish I did,” he replied. “ I spoke to the governor about it, and he told me it was to go to the prisoner who did the work.”

“ Oh, well,” I said, “ it will be a good thing for him; but what has become of the cleaner you had? I have noticed that there has been a different man the last three or four mornings.”

“ Oh, the other man committed himself,” said Piggot. “ I left him up here to do some cleaning the other afternoon, and he went into the room on the other side of the passage and looked out of the window, hoping, I suppose, to get a peep at the female prisoners, as their exercise-ground is overlooked from that room, and there is a girl he knows doing six months. Unfortunately for him the chief warder saw him at the window, and so he got the sack. I am very sorry, for he was a first-rate cleaner.”

“But cannot you get him back again after a bit?” I asked.

“Oh, no,” said Piggot, “once a man commits himself and gets sent back to his cell, he can never be taken out again. This same man got into trouble about this girl once before,” he continued, “they used to cough at each other in chapel, and they both got bowled out at last; but lor bless me I musn’t stop chattering here all night or I shall get the sack too. Now, good-night, sir, I’ll be up first thing to-morrow morning so as to give you plenty of time to get ready.”

Off trotted good-natured Piggot, and as soon as I could get my things packed I turned into bed and went to sleep.

The six o’clock bell was still ringing when Piggot entered my room the next morning, and told me to hurry down and get my bath over while he meantime would see that my breakfast should be all ready for me on my return. I was soon dressed, and having despatched my breakfast, Piggot and I took a careful survey all round the room, to see that nothing had been left behind. We had barely finished when the chief warder came up to say that the carriage had arrived, and that the governor wanted to see me. The chief was got-up in the most

gorgeous array; his dark blue frock coat was frogged and braided quite regardless of expense, his inexpressibles were of the same colour with a braided stripe about two inches wide, while his cap was resplendent with gold lace. I followed him downstairs and into the governor's office, and found the little man fussing about with various papers."

"You'll have to sign these two forms before you leave," said the governor. "One is, as you will see, a receipt for your clothes, the other for the balance of money due to you."

Having got through this, and returned the forms to the governor, I said to him, "Have I got to wear handcuffs on the journey, sir?"

"Yes, I am afraid so," he replied.

"But I am a perfectly innocent man in the eyes of the law, surely there is no regulation ordering an unconvicted man to be handcuffed?"

He hummed and hawed a good deal, and finally called in the chief warder.

"Mr. Watergate," he asked, "it is usual to handcuff men when taking them up for trial, is it not?"

"Yes, sir," said the chief, in a hesitating sort of way.

"Is there any special order about it?" said the governor, looking very hard at the chief.

"No, sir, not that I know of," replied Watergate.

The governor took another long stare at him, slightly raised his eyebrows, while the chief gave him a kind of Burleigh nod back, and then, turning to me, the governor said, "Very well, there seems to be a doubt about the question, so you can have the benefit of it. You will not," he continued, turning once more to the chief, "use the handcuffs to-day."

"Very well, sir," said the chief, and retired.

The governor then went round to his desk, and taking up a copy of the rules and regulations, said, "There is a clause I think I had better perhaps read to you in case of accidents," and he then read aloud as follows :—"A prisoner, after conviction, shall be allowed to have an interview with his solicitor, and write one letter to his friends."

"Thank you, sir," I said; "but I trust I shall not be obliged to avail myself of this privilege."

"I hope not, too," he replied; "but, at the same time, I wish you would try and realize how totally different your position will be if you come back here as a convicted prisoner."

"Thank you, sir," I replied, "I'll try to do so."

“Now, Mr. Watergate,” he called out, “I think it’s time you started.”

“Very well, sir,” said Watergate, and off we went, accompanied by Humphrey, who, as well as the chief, was to form the escort, and Old Bob, who always liked to see everything that was going on, bringing up the rear with my portmanteau. We passed through the main door, and across the front yard, and I found myself once more face to face with the consequential-looking gate porter, while a row of women and children, composed of the wives and families of the warders, lined each side of the gateway. There was a carriage and pair waiting to convey us to the station, and Watergate, Humphrey, and I were soon inside, and off we started through the quaint old town. We had not gone many yards before we heard the gate porter screaming frantically after us, and, as the driver pulled up, he came puffing to the window to tell the chief and Humphrey that they had forgotten to give up their keys, and there, sure enough, were the two sitting, each with his bundle of keys on the middle finger of his right hand.

“Bless me,” said the chief, “I never did such a thing before! But there,” he continued, turning to me, “I get so used to carrying

them that I really don't know whether I have them on my hand or not."

The gate porter having reclaimed the keys (all keys have to be left with the gate porter, no officer being allowed to take his keys outside the prison with him) we once more made a start, and, after a pleasant drive of about three-quarters of an hour, found ourselves at the railway station. It was a lovely morning, and, after three weeks of stone walls, I thoroughly enjoyed the beauty of the landscape. It was a small wayside station, with only two or three people besides ourselves, and Water-gate and I passed almost unnoticed to the up-platform, while Humphrey took charge of my luggage and purchased the tickets. We were to go third-class I found, although I knew that Government allowed second-class fare ; however, I said nothing, as it did not matter to me, and I guessed this was one of the customary perquisites.

The difference in the journey we were taking between three second-class and three third would be considerable, somewhere about 27s., and this, with the 1s. subsistence-money they would draw for me, would make 28s. between them.

On longer journeys the difference would, of course, be proportionately greater, and

since the prisons came under Government there has been a great deal of travelling about, as prisoners are continually being transferred from one prison to another. Under the old system each county was responsible for the expenses of its criminals, and would, therefore, naturally decline to have prisoners sent from other counties; now, of course, it makes no difference whether Bill Sykes is being boarded and lodged in Yorkshire or Middlesex, Government has to pay for him in either case. Hence, supposing that the prison at York requires to have the chapel refloored, and there do not happen to be any carpenters there at the time, the governor of York would apply to the prison commissioners, and they would send down an order to Wandsworth or Coldbath Fields for the governors there to send off at once to York the requisite number of carpenters. Under the old system, when they required carpenters, the chief warder used to send a note down to the superintendent of the county police. The superintendent forthwith notified the fact to the different inspectors. A strict watch was kept upon all the members of that particular trade who bore shady characters, and in a very short time there would be the requisite number of them in the county prison



for being drunk and disorderly, or assaulting the police, or something or the other.

But to return. We were soon in the train, and hurrying away as fast as the express could carry one. We had a compartment to ourselves, and, as Watergate, who knew this part of the country thoroughly, pointed out to me the various places of interest as we passed along, I quite enjoyed the journey, anxious and worried though I was. About midday we arrived at a large junction, where we had to change carriages, and here I was enabled to obtain the London daily papers. Watergate also offered to get me some lunch, but I declined, as I had my own lunch with me, and preferred eating that in the railway carriage to being paraded about the refreshment-rooms, though perhaps this is hardly a fair expression to use, as it would have been impossible for any two men to have performed their duty more pleasantly, and less ostentatiously, than Watergate and Humphrey; still, the former would have been obliged to come into the refreshment-rooms with me, and his resplendent get-up naturally attracted a good deal of attention. About three o'clock we arrived at Z—— Station, and found the chief warder of Z—— Prison on the platform, awaiting our arrival. He also was got-up in full

fig, so we altogether made a most imposing appearance. He had a cab waiting for us, and Watergate, Humphrey, and I jumped inside, the chief warder of the Z—— Prison got on the box, and away we went once more. The prison was only a short distance from the station, and I took this opportunity of thanking Watergate and Humphrey for the kind way in which they had done their duty, and we then drank each other's healths in the port that Piggot had provided for my lunch, as there was a doubt as to whether I should be allowed to bring into the prison any kind of intoxicating liquor. The prison now loomed in sight, a huge, gaunt red-brick building, with a most forbidding exterior. The cab came to a stop at an immense iron gate. The Z—— chief warder sprang nimbly from the box, the gate opened, we all got out of the cab, and in half the time it takes to tell, I found myself and my luggage in a long passage, with doors on either side; leading, as I afterwards discovered, to the governor's and clerk's offices. Everything in this prison seemed to go like clockwork, and we were no sooner inside than Watergate was marshalled into the clerk's office to deliver up the various papers concerning me, while the Z—— chief warder proceeded to open my portmanteau.

“There are only my clothes and things in there,” I said.

“Oh! I suppose they saw everything was right before you left Xshire, but you know there are certain forms we are obliged to go through,” he replied.

“Have you any tobacco or cigars?”

“I have got some tobacco, and a pipe or two, but no cigars. I had permission from the doctor to smoke, on the plea of health.”

“Oh, very well,” he said; “you must give them up to me now, and then you can ask our doctor about it when he comes his rounds this afternoon.”

I duly handed over the articles named, and he then asked if I had any knives or razors.

“No,” I said; “I don’t shave, and never carry a knife. With the exception of my clothes and linen, all I have with me is some food and a small quantity of wine.”

“Oh!” he said, “you are entitled to bring in a reasonable quantity of food and half a pint of wine.”


Watergate now came out of the clerk’s office, followed by one of the clerks, who told me the sum of money Watergate had handed over to him for me, and asked if that was the correct amount. I told him yes, it was quite correct;

and Watergate and Humphrey then took formal leave of me and departed.

The chief warder, a short, fair-haired man, with a wonderfully quick, intelligent eye, then turned to me, saying that if I would follow him he would take me up to the cell I was to occupy. "Never mind your portmanteau," he said as he saw me preparing to carry it with me, "I will have that brought up for you in a minute."

"Cannot I have special accommodation here by paying for it?" I demanded.

"Well, I am afraid we have no special rooms here," he replied; "but we will do the best we can for you, and you will be able to make an application to the governor presently." As he spoke he led the way to a door at the extreme end of the passage, and unlocking this, we passed at once into the prison itself.

It was far larger than the Xshire Prison, and the first thing that struck me was the extremely bare and cold appearance it presented. It was laid out in the shape of an inverted T () , the three individual portions of the letter joining each other at the place where we now entered and forming a large central hall, enabling you to see down all the three corridors. The corridors were numbered respec-

tively A B and C, and each corridor was divided into three wards, arranged in tiers one above the other and numbered, commencing from the ground floor A 1, A 2, A 3, and the same with B and C corridors. In the centre of the hall was a large iron spiral staircase, with iron platforms branching off to the various wards of the three corridors. The landings that ran round the corridors, and on which the cell doors opened, were of slate, railed with high iron railings. The ground floor was flagged with huge slabs of slate, polished up to a most wonderful pitch of cleanliness. All the iron work was painted white, and this in conjunction with the whitewashed walls was what caused the extremely cold and bare appearance that struck one on entering the prison.

The chief warder closed and locked the door through which we had passed, and then rang a bell labelled C on the right-hand side of the door.

This was immediately answered by the appearance of a fine-looking man, with long white whiskers and moustache, who marched up to the chief warder, saluted, and stood to attention, while the chief spoke a few words to him in an undertone.

The chief warder then turned to me and

said, "This is the officer of your ward; he will show you the way to the cell prepared for you, and give you any information you may require with regard to the rules and regulations."

The warder led the way to the spiral staircase, saying, "Follow me, please, and be careful how you mount the stairs, as the steps are rather slippery."

Up the stairs we went, past Ward 1, past No. 2, and finally came to the top of the staircase.

"Down here to the right," said the warder, and I turned down the slated landing marked C 3, following closely behind my conductor till he stopped at a cell about half way down numbered C 3 14, and unlocked the door, saying, "Here we are; I will see that your luggage is sent up directly, and if at any time you want anything just pull that bell-handle (showing me an iron handle at the side of the door), and you'll soon have an officer to know what you want."

I thanked him and asked to be allowed to have some ink, as I was anxious to write to my solicitor by that night's post.

"Very well," he said; "I will make the necessary application to the governor, and let you have an ink-bottle as soon as possible. With

these words he left me, carefully locking the door behind him, and I proceeded to examine my new quarters.

They were small, very small; I don't think the cell was more than twelve feet long by seven broad, and a most substantial iron bedstead placed on the left-hand side took up quite half the space. In the top right-hand corner was a closet-seat, in the shape of an iron cup, with a wooden lid; and to the right of that again, attached to the wall, some three feet from the ground, was a copper bowl about the size of a small slop-basin, with a tap of water laid on, and in this apparatus one was supposed to perform one's ablutions. In the corner by the door were a couple of slate shelves, containing two mess tins, a wooden spoon, salt-cellar, some paper, a comb, towel, &c. A small deal table and a cane-bottomed chair completed the furniture. The walls were painted a kind of dull yellow, and I found this a great relief to my eyes after the whitewashed walls at the Xshire Prison. The window, too, was a fair size, and, being of fluted glass, let in plenty of light and allowed one to see whether it was wet or fine. The cell and everything in it was scrupulously clean, and the copper and brasswork polished till it almost made you blink to look at it.



I had barely finished my survey when the door opened, and a nice-looking man, with a long broom beard and very bald head entered my cell. He was dressed in plain clothes, and carried a large wicker basket on his arm, which I saw contained books.

“I am the schoolmaster,” he said, “and have come to know whether you would like any library books?”

“Thank you,” I said; “I should like something to read.”

“Well, I am afraid they are rather a poor collection,” he replied; “but you can see if there is anything that will suit you.”

He placed the basket on the table and I looked over some of its contents, and they were, without any doubt, an exceedingly poor collection, being chiefly composed of series of tracts bound together and in a more or less dilapidated and dirty condition. Seeing, I suppose, a hopeless kind of look upon my face, the schoolmaster took a dive to the bottom of basket and fishing up a largish-sized volume said,

“Perhaps you might find something to amuse you in this; it is an old bound magazine, and one of the best things we have, though that’s not saying much,” he added with a smile.

After he had gone I examined my book and

found that it was a magazine for the year 1845, but I forget the name of it. It was evidently written for the lower middle class, and contained articles on the various trades and manufactures of Great Britain, and an historical account of the "Cid." I remember that one article contained a description of the manufacture of beaver hats, and concluded by saying that "a very inferior article called a silk hat had been introduced by the French, but was not at all likely to displace the fine old beaver hat manufactured by our workmen."

While I was engaged looking over this wonderful book my door was again thrown open and a warder called out, "The Governor going his rounds." A few moments later the governor entered my cell. He was an exceedingly tall fine-looking man with a handsome, kindly face, and a thoroughbred look about him that stamped him at once as a gentleman. He had the unmistakable stamp of a soldier about him too, and I guessed at once that he had been in the service. I afterwards learnt that he was a man of very good family, and had been in a crack regiment. His present employment must have been exceedingly loathsome to such a man, but he did his work in a quiet, gentlemanly way that won the respect of all. He insisted upon

having the discipline of the prison carried out to the letter, but any abuse of authority on the part of the warders was immediately checked, and severely reprimanded. He took a rapid glance round my cell, and I felt intuitively that he had looked me over, and everything else in the cell and formed his own estimate. Turning to me he said, "I received your application to be allowed to have a furnished room according to the regulations, but am sorry to say that I cannot give you any other accommodation than this, as we have no rooms here."

"Very well," I replied; "I made the application because the regulations say that on the payment of half-a-crown a week, a prisoner awaiting trial can have a furnished room; but of course if the regulations cannot be carried out, I must do the best I can here."

"This regulation has only just come into force," said the governor, "and I have been appointed here so recently that I have not yet brought the matter to the notice of the commissioners. I have, however," he continued, pointing to the bed, "sent you up a spring mattress and perfectly new bedding, also this chair, and will keep the cells on each side of yours empty, so that you may be as much as possible to yourself, but this is all I can do."

“Thank you very much, sir. Do you think you could, in addition, allow me to have a cold bath every morning?” I demanded.

After a moment's pause, he said, “Yes, I'll have a bath placed in the adjoining cell and you can go in there of a morning and take it while this cell is being cleaned out.”

I then inquired if I could exercise alone?

“Well,” he said, “I don't quite know if that can be managed. I am rather short of officers just now, and I don't know that I should be able to spare one to go out with you alone.”

“I used to be allowed out without a warder at the Xshire Prison,” I said.

“I couldn't allow you to do so here, you must have an officer with you? However,” he continued, “I will inquire into the matter, and if an officer can be spared, you shall exercise alone with him.”

I thanked him, and he then asked me whether I would go to chapel of a day or not?

“It is optional with unconvicted prisoners whether they will do so or not,” he said; “but whichever you decide to do now, you must keep to for the whole time you are waiting trial.”

Remembering the hideous discomfort of the Xshire chapel I hesitated what answer to

make, and the governor, seeing me hesitate, said, "If I were you I should say no." So the matter rested, and I didn't go.

At the Xshire Prison I had been informed that I was obliged to go to chapel; but the governor and other officials there had been so long under the county rules, that they made a regular muddle of them with the new Government regulations, and carried on the prison on a kind of mixed scale that gave the unfortunate prisoners the worst of both systems.

This, however, is a digression. I next asked the governor if I might provide my own food, and he said, "Yes, certainly; let me have in writing what you require, and I will send round to the hotel that is near here, and see what arrangement can be made. You will not," he continued, "be able to get anything to-day, as it is now too late, but I will send an officer up to you presently, and if you will give the written list to him, I will try and arrange for you to begin to-morrow."

I thanked him, and after asking if there was anything else I required, and receiving an answer in the negative, he departed. I at once sat down and made out a written statement of what I should require, namely, tea, bread and butter, and cold meat for breakfast; chop,

steak or cut from joint with vegetables, bread, and a pint of beer for dinner; and tea, and bread and butter, and eggs for tea, and requested that the price per day should be given in the reply. I then wrote a short note to my solicitors, and had barely finished, when a warder came to tell me that the governor wished to know if I had made out a list of what I required. I accordingly handed the list to him, and he told me that he had orders to take it to an hotel, and if they could not manage to do what I required there, he was to go to a confectioner's close by and see whether they could send in what I wanted. I said, "I wish you would try and get the matter arranged for me at a reasonable figure, and see that the things supplied are good and properly cooked."

"It would be against the regulations for me to interfere in any way," he replied; "all I can do is to take the list to the tradespeople and ask them to give me a written reply, stating whether they can supply what you require, and at what price."

"But at the Xshire Prison the warder used to buy all my things for me," I said.

"I don't know what they do down there," he replied; "but I know what the regulations say, and with the governor we have now, if we don't

keep to the regulations we should very soon hear of it."

"Well, the regulations ought to be exactly the same there as they are here," I suggested.

"Of course they ought," he replied; "but, if they don't keep to the regulations there, we are obliged to here."

He then departed, telling me that he would let me have an answer during the evening.

At 5.45 supper was brought round, and, as I had brought a piece of cheese with me, I determined to see what the brown bread was like here. I found it to be very fair indeed, properly baked, and apparently made of far better materials than the Xshire prison bread.

Soon after supper I had a visit from the doctor, a short, fair, good-looking little man, most nattily dressed. He had a peculiar jerky way of speaking, and a trick of nodding his head up and down like a Chinese mandarin, but there was a wonderfully cute expression about his face that intimated pretty plainly that one would have to get up very early to find the blind side of him. He marched into my cell with his hands behind his back, and his tall hat very much on one side of his head, while the hospital warder, a great, big, burly, red-bearded fellow, with a string of medals across



his breast, stood to attention in the doorway, evidently in fear and trembling of his tiny superior.

"Anything the matter with you?" he asked, and before I could reply continued, "Well, look all right any way, don't suppose you'll trouble me much."

"No," I said, "I am pretty well."

"What do the medical papers say about him?" he fiercely demanded of the hospital warder, and that stalwart warrior replied, in a meek and trembling voice,—

"Heart complaint, sir, otherwise general good health, sir."

"Hum!" said the little man, turning to me, "Just take off your things and let me examine your heart."

I accordingly took off my coat, waistcoat, and opened my shirt, and was duly sounded, poked, and stethoscoped.

At the conclusion of these various operations, the doctor remarked, in an oracular manner,—

"More nervousness than anything else, I expect, arising from the strain on the nervous system, but be careful."

"I have got a prescription here," I said, "that was given me by the doctor of the

Xshire Prison; may I have it made up, as I found it do me a good deal of good?"

"Let me have a look at it," he replied.

I handed the paper to him, and, after glancing it over, he said, "Pooh! nonsense! much more likely to produce disease than anything else."

I, however, was quite satisfied that the medicine had done me good, and was determined to have it made up, and see for myself whether it was the same. I, therefore, pressed the application, and finally the little man said,—

"Very well, but you must send the prescription out to a chemist, and pay for it."

I assented to this arrangement, and the doctor handed the paper to the warder with the necessary directions, and, after telling me to keep myself as quiet as I could, he left.

A little before eight o'clock the warder came into my cell to let me know the result of his inquiries about the food I wanted. At the hotel he told me they were at present so busy as to be unable to spare the time to cook and send up the meals I required, but he brought me an answer from the neighbouring pastry-cook, offering to send me in breakfast at 2s. per day, dinner at 4s., and tea at 1s. 6d. I

thought it extremely dear after what I had been paying at Xshire, and told the warder so.

He said, "Yes, it is dear; but they are the only two places near here, and were you to try and get the meals up from the town they would be stone cold before they got here."

"Well, I suppose there is nothing to be done," I said, "and I must put up with it. Will you," I continued, "tell the governor that these terms suit me, and ask if they may commence sending to-morrow morning."

"All right," he replied, "I'll see about it."

Left once more to myself, I set to work to do a little reading, but found it well-nigh impossible, from the horrible din made by the man above me. He was busily amusing himself by playing the devil's tattoo on his table, and kept at it in a systematic manner that was enough to fidget one's life out. It is true he occasionally varied the entertainment by playing a kind of accompaniment with the heels of his boots on the slate floor, but this only made the annoyance slightly greater. The way he kept on at it, without ever ceasing for a single instant, was what made it so truly awful. He used to come back to his cell about a quarter to eight; he was, I suppose, employed in some

work about the prison during the day, and from then, until about twenty minutes past eight, he never stopped for a second. He only stopped then, I suppose, because he knew that the warder would be round at 8.30 to see that all men were in bed, and he would get into trouble if he was found up. Nobody would believe what I suffered with that man.

“How often, oh ! how often I have wish’d that the ebbing  
tide

Would bear that gentleman away on its bosom to the ocean  
wild and wide ;”

and I shouldn’t have cared how wild or wide the ocean happened to be at the time either, so thoroughly furious was I with the fellow. It became such an awful nuisance at last that, after standing it for four days, I complained to one of the warders about it.

“Oh, that’s the fellow is it ?” he said. “I’ll go up to him directly, and very soon stop his little game.”

I don’t know what happened to the fellow, but I was not troubled any more, and when I afterwards learnt that rapping was a high misdemeanour, punishable with bread and water, or dark cell, I almost regretted I had spoken, but I really believe I should have been driven mad if it had gone on much longer. When I went to bed that night I found my

present sleeping accommodation a wonderful improvement on my Xshire bed, and stretched myself out on the spring mattress now provided for me with a feeling of unalloyed satisfaction. I did not have to get up the following morning, as it was Sunday, until seven o'clock, and when the warder of my corridor came round to unlock my door he told me I could stay in bed until eight o'clock if I liked, as my breakfast would not be brought in till half-past eight. "I shall go off duty at a quarter to eight," he continued, "but if you ring your bell at eight o'clock the officer doing patrol during breakfast-hour will let you into the adjoining cell to have your bath."

I told him I was much obliged to him, and would most certainly take his advice, as it was delightful to find oneself once more in a comfortable bed. At eight o'clock I rang my bell, and the patrol warder took me into the adjoining cell, where I found a fine large hip-bath all ready filled with water, and was locked up there to perform my ablutions, with the intimation that, as soon as I had finished I was to ring, and would then be reconducted to my own quarters. While I was having my bath my cell was brushed out, and my bed made, so that all I had to do on my return was to finish

my dressing, and then wait patiently for my breakfast. In due time this was brought me by a warder, and I found the things provided fairly good in quality, but decidedly lacking in quantity. About ten o'clock a man in plain clothes came to tell me that he had orders from the governor to take me out to exercise. I followed him along the corridor down the staircase, then all along corridor B, till we reached a low iron door at the extreme end of the corridor, and, unlocking this, we passed into the open air. Turning to the left, along a gravel path bordered by the vegetable gardens of the warders, we passed round the corner of the B wing of the prison, and I found myself in a large open space, the form of a parallelogram, some 200 yards long, and about ninety wide. A broad gravel path ran completely round it, bordered on the south and east by the B and A wings of the prison, and on the west and north by a brick wall some twenty feet high. This was the exercising-ground, and the warder told me that I might walk anywhere along the gravel path that I pleased. I stopped a minute to ask him why he had plain clothes on, as I was not sure whether he was a warder or what he was.

He said, "Oh, I am qualifying for an assistant warder; since the prisons came under

Government a man wishing to become a warder has to undergo three months' probation. At the expiration of that period he gets a certificate from the governor, stating that he is competent to perform the duties required of him, and he then receives his formal appointment as assistant warder, and is supplied with uniform."

I was going to ask him some more questions, but he stopped me, saying,—

"I mustn't talk any more to you, it is quite against the rules, and I should get severely reprimanded; now, you go and take a walk round whilst I walk up and down here."

As I passed along the gravel path I noticed on my right a row of small red-brick dens some six or seven feet long by three or four feet wide, with strong iron gates to them. Each of them had a pile of flints and a hammer in them, and I afterwards learnt that these were the stone-breaking sheds where men sentenced to hard labour, but pronounced by the doctor unfit for the tread-wheel, were sent to perform their daily task.

It was a bright sunshiny morning, and I thoroughly enjoyed the light and air after the close confinement of my tiny cell. The time passed so quickly that I could scarcely credit it



when the warder told me that my half-hour was up, and I must now go in, as the bell would ring for chapel directly, and he had to see the men to their places.

No one who has not experienced it can form any conception of how much, and how quickly, confinement in a small cell tells upon the health and nervous system of a man who has been accustomed to pass the greater part of his time in the open air, and I found the half-hour a day allotted to me here for exercise totally insufficient.

Sunday dragged away terribly slowly, and I more than once regretted that I had not decided to go to chapel. My dinner was brought up to me at half-past one, and, like my breakfast, was decidedly deficient in quantity, but decently cooked and nicely served. The beer, however, they sent me was simply atrocious—the commonest kind of fourpenny beer I should think—yet when I came to pay my bill I found they charged me sixpence a pint for it. During the afternoon the governor came in as he went his rounds, and took a good look at everything, and asked me if I was getting my food sent in all right. His visit rather surprised me, as the governor of the Xshire Prison never came into the prison on Sundays, but the governor

here seemed to be continually moving about the building, and there certainly was a wonderful difference in the discipline and general morale of the two prisons.

At the Xshire Prison warders (particularly old Bob and Humphrey) would be shouting to each other or to prisoners, and making noise enough for a dozen ; here everything was as quiet as possible. There the warders seemed to do what was right in their own eyes, and you would meet them wandering about the corridors in a purposeless kind of way, having, as they said, so much to do that they did not know where to begin. Here every warder seemed to have his hours and duties all laid down for him, and from the quick business-like way they went about their work, I expect they knew that if they did not do their duty efficiently and promptly they would very soon hear of it.

There was just the difference between these two prisons there is in all establishments where the superior, in the one case, looks into everything personally, and himself sees that the work is properly done, while in the other the superior leaves the supervision to his inferiors.

Here was Captain K——, a gentleman and a man of old family, who, having entered the prison service, was determined to perform the

various duties, however repugnant they may have been to his feelings, thoroughly and efficiently. There, Major S——, a man of no particular family, and who, in sporting parlance would have decidedly been styled a “half-bred ‘un,” swaggered about in a most consequential manner, trying to impress upon everybody that he was far too big a swell to have anything to do with the working of the prison, and that all business of that kind must be managed by the chief warder.

Personally, I have nothing to say against Major S——; and if in the future I could in any way help him or any member of his family, I would gladly do so; but in a prison so much depends on the kind of man selected to be the governor, that I feel it to a certain extent my duty to contrast the results of an efficient and inefficient man.

I must in fairness state that there was one thing greatly against Major S——, which he could not, perhaps, altogether help, and that was the fact of his being disliked and mistrusted by the warders, though it was mainly owing to his stupid fussiness and silly false pride. The previous governor had been very popular among the warders, and had taken a kindly interest in them and their families, and when off duty had

been accustomed to speak to them in a pleasant, friendly manner. S——, on the contrary, took no notice of his subordinates whatever, and had a contemptuous way of speaking to them that used to put their backs up most fearfully. At all events, one way or another, he had managed in the space of a few months to earn the dislike and contempt of all his subordinates, and the consequence was that his orders were either evaded or carried out in a half-hearted sort of way, and the discipline of the prison suffered accordingly.

The former governor had been a strict disciplinarian, and the prison had been handed over to S—— in a model state of efficiency ; but, judging from the state of affairs when I left, I should think that by this time the discipline of the prison was what would be called up there all “ mops and broomhandles.”

The Z—— Prison, on the contrary, had been handed over to Captain K—— in an utterly demoralized condition—discipline there was none, order less—and abuses of every description had crept in ; but by firmness and strict personal attention to his duties, he in a few months made his prison second to none in England for order and discipline.

The previous governor had, from all I could

learn, been everything that he ought not to have been, and a short history of him and the mode of his appointment will, once more, illustrate the necessity that existed for taking the prisons out of the hands of the county authorities.

This good man, whom we will call Pink, had started in life as a carpenter (his case being thus analogous with Wigan's in more ways than one), but not caring particularly about his trade, he applied for and obtained an assistant wardership at the Z—— Prison. He was a big, powerful, and blustering fellow, always bullying and harassing those who were in his power, but displaying a fawning servility to his superiors that seems to have suited the man who was then governor, and Pink soon managed to push his way up to chief warder. He was, however, greatly assisted by the fact that he had managed to make a favourable impression on the governor's only daughter, and she, I suppose, took special care that her pa should bring the efficient services of Pink continually to the notice of the visiting magistrates. Pink was a good-looking kind of man in a vulgar way, with plenty of self-conceit, and pushed his way with the daughter so successfully that they were married soon after his appointment to the chief

wardership. It was the old story, marry your master's daughter, and have your bread buttered for life. I don't know what the governor thought of the match, but prison governors were very rarely gentlemen at that time, and, at all events, he acquiesced in the arrangement and helped his son-in-law on in every way that he could. The governor was getting an old man, so Pink quietly dropped the name of chief warder, assumed that of deputy governor, and gradually took the whole management of the prison into his own hands.

Matters went on like this for a while, and then as soon as the visiting committee had got thoroughly accustomed to transacting all their business with Pink, the governor requested to be allowed to retire on a pension, and proposed his son-in-law as his successor. The magistrates agreed to this arrangement, and the ex-carpenter found himself head of the Z—— County Prison, with unlimited power over some three or four hundred men. He let no opportunity slip of ingratiating himself with the visiting committee, and played his part so well that he soon gained their entire confidence, and twisted them round his little finger like a lot of old women. Totally unfitted in every way for his position, he commenced a course of bullying

cruelty that made the prison a perfect hell upon earth. Seeing the rules and regulations utterly disregarded by their superior, the warders naturally began to disregard them also, and soon every kind of abuse crept in. Pink took to having favourites amongst the prisoners, and when he happened to take a fancy to a man, would let him go about the prison as he pleased and took care that he should have as much extra food as he liked. Woe betide, however, the unhappy wretch that had the misfortune to fall into his bad graces, for he would bully, starve, and worry him till he made his life a burden to him.

A prisoner who was completing a term of eighteen months' hard labour told me that he had done his first six months under the government of Pink, and assured me that if the prison had not changed hands, he should never have lived to complete his sentence. I afterwards had an opportunity of asking a warder, who had served for over ten years under Pink, whether the statements I had heard were correct, and he was obliged to own that they were. Later on I had them confirmed in a still more satisfactory manner, for I happened to hear a couple of the warders comparing notes on the late and present governors.



“Well,” Warder No. 1 was saying, “if the captain is sharp he is strict upon all alike, and if you have a real grievance he precious soon brings it to the notice of the Commissioners.”

“Give me Pink,” replied Warder No. 2, “lor, what games we used to carry on in them days, though it certainly was rough on some of the prisoners.”

“It certainly was amusing,” laughed No. 1, “and the way Pink used to humbug the visiting magistrates was good to see, it was real cute the manner in which he would get a prisoner out of their way, who, he thought it was likely, might make any unpleasant revelations,” and they passed on, laughing heartily at their reminiscences. It spoke wonderfully well for Captain K——’s capabilities for administration that he should have succeeded in bringing this prison to its present state of efficiency in such a short time, and shows that Government ought to take the greatest care in selecting men to governorships when so much—indeed, one may say everything—depends upon the way they carry out their instructions. A prison with an incompetent governor is like a ship without a helm; but a really competent man, assisted by a chaplain who would throw his whole heart into his work, would do more in

twelve months towards reclaiming the criminal classes than all the prisoner's aid societies in the kingdom would compass in a century.

I have, however, said enough about governors for the present, let me now return to my narrative. I got through Sunday somehow or the other, and woke up on Monday with plenty of work before me. The judge was to make his formal entry at twelve o'clock that day, and on the following morning I should have to be up at the Court, and, for aught I knew to the contrary, mine might, perhaps, be the first case taken. There were some fourteen or fifteen other prisoners, but the order in which the cases are taken depends entirely upon the wishes of the judge. I was to see my solicitor in the afternoon, and my morning was spent in going over and making additions to the instructions I had drawn up for him to lay before counsel that night. I had been carefully over the depositions made by the witnesses when I was committed, and made notes of all the discrepancies and misstatements, and I now, with a very natural anxiety, had to go over the work I had done, and make sure that I had not missed any point that would tell in my favour. My solicitor had, of course, drawn up and sent in the brief for counsel some days before, but

these notes of mine were to assist him in his verbal consultation with them. The morning soon passed, and shortly after dinner the chief warder came into my cell, and told me that my solicitor was waiting to see me.

"Cannot I see him up here?" I asked.

"No, that is contrary to the rules," he replied.

"Then, where shall I see him?"

"In the ordinary visiting cell. We have no other place here," he answered.

"But it's my solicitor," I expostulated, "and I have to go over all that pile of papers with him that you see on my table here. Now, am I to do that in the ordinary visiting cell?"

"I'll let you into the centre compartment," he said, "and then you can pass them through the bars to him."

"Look here," I answered, "I protest against having to see the solicitor in the ordinary visiting cell, and wish to see the governor."

"Well, I'll see if the governor is in his office, and if so ask if you may see him," he replied; "but it will be no use; I am satisfied he'll make no alteration in the regular routine."

"Never mind," I said, "I would like to see him myself about the matter."

“Very well,” he replied, “you had better follow me down now, and then, before passing you through to the visiting cell, I will go into the governor’s office and see what he says.”

I followed him along the corridor, down the staircase, and just as we reached the bottom the governor came into the prison through the door leading from his private office. The chief warder stepped forward, and asked the governor if I could speak to him.

“Yes, certainly,” said the governor, and then, turning to me, asked what I wanted.

“I wish to know, sir,” I said, “whether I cannot see my solicitor either in my cell or in some room where I shall be able to go over these instructions I have prepared for him (showing the governor the bundle of papers I held in my hand), and where I can have facilities for making any alterations or additions that he may suggest.”

“It is impossible for me to allow him to come into the prison,” replied the governor. “There has been an order sent down from the Home Office that nobody, on no matter what excuse, is to be allowed inside a prison without a special order from the Home Secretary.”

“But is there no room where I can see him,” I asked, “and where I can have the

means I require for giving him the necessary instructions : he is my solicitor, and the regulations distinctly point out that a prisoner waiting trial is to be allowed to see his solicitor alone, and hand him any papers he may think necessary for his defence."

"The regulations don't exactly say alone," replied the governor; "what they say is, that the interview shall take place within the sight of an officer of the prison, who shall be placed out of earshot if required. The fact is," he continued, "that I have no other place but the ordinary visiting cell in which to allow your interview to take place, and if you are passed into the central partition there you will be able to hand your solicitor any papers you may have, and there is a table on his side which I will have supplied with pens and ink, and he can then make any alterations that are necessary in the statements you have drawn up."

"Well," I said, "I think it is a very hard case that I cannot see him in some more comfortable and convenient manner."

"I am very sorry," he answered, "but I have no alternative."

Then, turning to the chief warder, he said, "Pass him into the central compartment, and then, when you have shown the solicitor

into the visiting side, you can leave them alone."

"Very well, sir," said the chief warder, and then, telling me to follow him, he lead the way down corridor B, till we arrived at a narrow iron door on the right hand side.

"Here we are," said the chief, and, unlocking the door, we passed through, and I found myself in the visiting cell. It was a good-sized, square-shaped room divided into three nearly equal-sized compartments by stout iron bars running from the floor to the ceiling, and these were crossed horizontally at regular intervals by equally stout bars of the same material. Under ordinary circumstances the prisoner stood in the first compartment, a warder marched up and down the central one, while the visitor had possession of the third. According to the instructions given by the governor I was shown into the central division, and had only the single row of bars between myself and my solicitor, and could thus, of course, pass anything I wished through to him. Having carefully locked me up in this kind of imitation den for wild beasts the chief went in search of my solicitor, and having found and duly ushered him into his compartment, supplied us with pens and ink, and left us to ourselves. I fancy,

however, that he only retired to the other side of the door, and kept his eye applied to the spy hole, for, towards the close of our interview, I produced some letters that I had written to my friends, and handed them to my solicitor to post for me, and had no sooner passed them through to him than the chief warder came bouncing in. He looked straight at the letters then at my solicitor, hesitated, and finally asked if our interview was nearly over. I said, no ; but that we should be done shortly, and, to my intense relief, he departed again, for I was desperately afraid that he would tell my solicitor to hand the letters over.

At the conclusion of our interview we rang the bell, and I was escorted back to my cell, to get through the remainder of the day as best I could.

On the following morning the warder of my corridor came in at half-past six, and told me that I must be dressed and ready to start at half-past eight, as the prisoners left the prison at nine o'clock, and there would be the governor's inspection to be got through before leaving. I asked him to see that my breakfast was brought up in good time, and to tell the chief warder, if he saw him, that I wished to speak to him. I had dressed and was waiting the



arrival of my breakfast when the chief warder came round to my cell to know what I wanted to see him about.

“I want to know if I can have a carriage to go up to the court-house in?” I asked, “for I shouldn’t at all like to go up in the van.”

“Well,” replied the chief, “there is very little time to order a carriage, and, if you take my advice, you won’t have one.”

“Oh, but I don’t at all like the idea of the van,” I said, “and would much prefer to have a carriage, and am quite prepared to pay for it.”

“Look here,” said the chief, “if you go up in a carriage you’ll only excite remark; whereas, if you go up in the van, nobody can possibly see you. The van is brought inside the prison-gate, so nobody can see you getting in; and on its arrival at the court-house it is driven into the yard at the back, and nobody is allowed in there but the warders on duty. I’ll come up for you the last thing,” he continued, “after I have put all the other prisoners in the van. In this way it will be just as good as having a carriage, and save you a great deal of trouble.”

Only half convinced, I finally consented to this arrangement, and the chief warder hurried

away, telling me to look sharp over my breakfast, as the governor liked everybody to be started off to the court-house in good time.

I had barely finished breakfast when the warder of the corridor came to say that it was time for me to start, and that I must follow him down as quickly as possible. He lead the way down the staircase, across the central hall, and through the iron door there, into the passage that ran past the governor's office. I followed him nearly to the end of this passage, and then, turning to the right, he unlocked a door and showed me into a largish room, with a good-sized table in the centre, and several Windsor chairs round the walls.

"You will have to wait here a few minutes," said the warder, "until the governor sends for you, as he inspects every man before leaving."

A few moments elapsed, the governor entered, looked me carefully over, and asked if I had any request to make. I told him nothing, and he then ordered the warder to take me out to the van. The warder led the way, I followed, and the governor brought up the rear. Passing down the passage, the warder threw open the door at the end of it, and I found myself in the large gravelled yard that lay between the outer

walls and great gate of the prison and the main building.

In the centre of the yard stood the objectionable-looking prison-van (Black Maria, as it is commonly called), with a powerful-looking pair of horses attached to it, while the chief and several subordinate warders were ranged near the door, evidently waiting my arrival. As the governor entered the yard, the chief and other warders stood to attention and saluted.

The door of the van was open, and the chief warder told me to get in and take possession of the box-like compartment I should find on the left-hand side. I got in, followed by a warder, and found myself in a dark, narrow passage that seemed to run the whole length of the vehicle. "Here you are," said the warder, "this is your compartment," and following the direction of his hand, I found myself in a kind of tiny sentry-box, with a wooden seat running across the centre. The warder clapped to the door of this box-like structure, and I found myself in semi-darkness, and with no possibility of moving, so limited was the accommodation provided. The warder took a seat somewhere in the dark passage, called out that everything was right inside, and the van-door was shut and locked. I could hear a warder mounting on to

the step behind, while another, from the noise made, seemed to be clambering up beside the driver ; the governor called out, " You can go ; " and with a roll and a lurch away we started. What with the darkness, the heat, the smell, and the jolting over the stones, it was more like being in the hold of some small coasting-steamer than anything else. " Thank goodness," I thought, " it isn't far to the court ; for a little of this goes a long way."

We were no sooner fairly under way than whispered conversations seemed to be started all round me ; everybody appeared to be asking everybody else what they were there for, and how long they expected to get. Occasionally the warder would shout out, " Not so much noise there ; " but this seemed to be done more as a matter of form than anything else, as the talking went on just the same, and he made no other attempt to prevent it.

After about a quarter of an hour's shaking we suddenly came to a stop, a short parley took place, some gates were apparently opened, and then off we started again, only, however, to be finally pulled up a few seconds later, as we were now, as I afterwards discovered, at the back of the court-house, and within the yard set apart for the reception of prisoners.

After a few moments' delay the van-door was opened, and the warder, unlocking my door, told me to descend. I tumbled out somehow or the other, and, half-blinded by the sunlight, vaguely followed one of the warders who I heard calling out, "This way, this way." He led the way across the gravelled yard in which I now found myself, and by the time my dazzled eyes were getting accustomed to the light, I found myself facing a row of dark-green doors that ran the whole length of one of the side walls that surrounded the space in which we were.

Stopping in front of one of these doors, the warder unlocked it and motioned me to enter. I did so, and the door was at once shut and locked behind me. I found myself in a low, narrow chamber, some six feet long by four broad, with a wooden bench at the further end. The walls were whitewashed, and the place seemed fairly clean ; but there was a damp, unpleasant, earthy smell, and the one small window over the door admitted a very inadequate amount of light.

I had luckily brought an ulster with me, and spreading this on the wooden bench, I prepared to make myself as comfortable as circumstances would admit. I heard the other doors of the row being rapidly opened and shut, as the

various other inmates of Black Maria were handed out and disposed of in their new quarters, and sundry mysterious knockings and whisperings soon told me that I had neighbours on either side of me.

After waiting for what seemed to me a very long time, I heard the doors being rapidly thrown open, and the trampling of feet outside led me to conclude that the prisoners were being marshalled out. A few moments later my own door was thrown open, and a warder told me that I should have to go into court with the rest of the prisoners, to be paraded before the judge and plead guilty or not guilty to the indictment against me. I accordingly stepped out of the cell, and took my place at the rear of a motley group of some fifteen or sixteen men and boys charged with various offences against the law of the land, and dressed in every conceivable fashion, from the rags and tatters of the professional tramping thief to the Sunday broadcloth of the quondam respectable shopkeeper. In the centre of the line was a fine, tall, powerful-looking young fellow in the uniform of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, and his scarlet tunic gave a patch of colour to the oddly-assorted group, giving it almost a picturesque appearance. I had not much time, however, to scan the features

of my companions in misfortune, for one of the warders on the front of the line shouted out, "Right turn! march!" and we advanced, led by a warder, towards a low doorway on the opposite side of the yard.

On passing through the doorway, I found myself at the foot of a steep staircase, and hearing the hum of voices, guessed at once that it led up into the court-house. The men in front of me slowly mounted the stairs, and by the time I got half-way up, I could see the galleries of the court above me densely crowded, and most heartily did I wish myself anywhere but where I was. I had nearly reached the top of the stairs, when some one, I think the clerk of the prison, leant over the railing that ran round the top of the staircase, and called out to the warder to take me back again, as I should not be required to plead till my trial took place. I did not wait for any further orders, but bundled downstairs at a double quick pace, only too delighted to put off the evil moment as long as possible.

When I reached the yard, I asked the warder if he had heard the order in which the cases were to be tried, but he told me that he knew nothing about it, and that it entirely depended upon the judge.



“Then shall I have to stop in this miserable little cell all day ?” I demanded.

“Yes,” replied the warder, “your case might come on at any moment, and you must be here.”

We had now reached the door of my cell, and I was once more locked up in this miserable hole. I had brought a newspaper in my pocket, but the light was so bad that I could only read for five or ten minutes at a time, and the morning dragged away so slowly that it seemed never going to end.

The Court adjourned at one o'clock, and shortly after that hour the governor went along the cells, visiting each prisoner, and inquiring if he had any complaints or requests to make. When he came to see me, I asked if I should be obliged to stop all day, and he said, “Yes, I cannot let you go back until the Court rises. Your case, for aught I know to the contrary, may be called on at the conclusion of the present one, and if this should happen, and you were not here, I should be reprimanded by the judge.”

“Well, sir, could somebody be sent to tell my solicitor to come round here to see me ?” I asked.

“Oh, he was in court this morning,” replied the governor ; “and I heard him say he was coming

in again after lunch, so I will tell him myself you wish to see him. You had better," he continued, "get him to apply to the clerk of the court as to whether he can give any information as to the day on which your case is likely to be taken."

"Very well, I'll do so," I answered, and then asked if there was any chance of my getting my dinner that day.

"Oh, yes," said the governor, "I gave the necessary orders this morning to ensure your dinner being sent up here instead of to the prison, and I have no doubt it will arrive shortly."

"Thank you, sir," I said, feeling much cheered at the certainty of my midday meal turning up in due course.

The governor then departed, and I was once more thrown upon my own resources. My dinner, however, arrived very shortly afterwards, and that furnished me with employment for the next half-hour. I had no sooner finished my dinner than my solicitor came round to see me. He informed me that the judge had given notice that my case would be the last taken, and that the witnesses in it would not be required before Thursday, adding that in all probability, as far as he could at present see, it would not

take place before Saturday. I was very glad to get this definite information, as I did not at all relish the idea of having to spend day after day in my present miserable quarters, and had no doubt that the governor would now give me leave to stop up at the prison, at all events, till Thursday. My solicitor had brought me in several letters from my friends, so on his departure I had employment for the next half-hour or so, but after that time began to hang very heavy on my hands. I tried to induce the warder to let me take a little exercise in the yard, but he told me it was impossible, as he was the only person there, and, having to attend to the gate, was liable to be called away at any moment.

Five o'clock came at last. I was once more handed into Black Maria, and after a repetition of the morning's jolting, landed back at the prison. My cell looked quite comfortable after the hole I had been in, and by the time I had had my tea, I began to feel in a more agreeable frame of mind. During the evening the governor came his rounds, and I repeated to him what my solicitor had told me about my trial not taking place till the end of the week, and asked leave to stop up at the prison until the day for my trial was definitely fixed.

“You can stop up here to-morrow,” he said, “but I shall have to take you down again on Thursday, as the witnesses were told to attend on that day.”

I then asked if I could not have a little exercise the next time I was kept down there all day, but he told me he was afraid it was impossible, as there were no orders on the subject, and the number of warders authorized to be taken down to the court-house were insufficient to allow of the prisoners being exercised.

The next morning, at eight o'clock, I heard the men being hurried down to Black Maria, and very glad I was that I had not to form one of the party. In the afternoon I had a visit from the chaplain. He was a tall, middle-aged man, with a face, both in contour and expression, exactly like a sheep. There was a plaintive, depreciatory kind of manner about him that did not at all prepossess me in his favour, and I fancy he was totally unfitted for his present position. He came drifting into my cell with a helpless kind of air, and, after considerable hesitation, asked, “What is your name?” I told him.

“You belong to the Church of England?”

“Yes,” I answered.

“You will be defended, I presume?”

“Oh yes,” I said, though what on earth this had to do with his previous question I could not make out. He, however, seemed to think that he had done all that could be expected of him, and with a hurried “Good-morning!” he departed.

If mine was a sample of his usual visits to prisoners, he must have done a great deal of good during his term of office. He was not, however, the regular chaplain, but merely temporarily employed, as the former chaplain had retired on a pension, and a new one had not as yet been appointed. Whether he was offered, or would have accepted, the permanent chaplaincy, I have not the slightest idea; but from all accounts, he was hardly the sort of man to select for the position.

Thursday morning found me being hustled off again to my sable conveyance, and ten o'clock found me installed in my elongated sentry-box, vainly cudgelling my brains for some way of passing the morning. The sun was shining brightly, and a little more light penetrated into my quarters this morning, enabling me to read the various records left by former inmates on the whitewashed walls,—how John Watson had got seven stretch, Bill Johnson four months' hard, and many others of the same description too

numerous to mention. There were also one or two paragraphs in thieves' English, perfectly intelligible to the initiated, I have no doubt, but so much High Dutch to me, although I puzzled over them, having nothing else to do, for a considerable time. My solicitor came round to see me at one o'clock, when the Court rose for luncheon, to let me know that the judge had given notice that he could not take my case till Saturday morning. This continual putting off of the evil day was rather a nuisance, as I should, of course, have much preferred to have had it over and know the worst, though, in the event of my being convicted it was rather an advantage to me, as your sentence always counts from the day the Assizes commence, not the date of the day you are tried on, and consequently I should already have done five days of whatever punishment was awarded me if found guilty on Saturday.

When the governor came round at dinner-time I applied to him to be allowed to go back to the prison, and he gave me leave to do so at two o'clock, when the van would be returning with some prisoners who had been convicted that morning.

Prisons are all conducted on the silence system, and the men convicted seemed to

know this, for we were no sooner inside the van than the whole lot, some half-dozen apparently, started talking as hard as they could go, evidently desirous of making the best use of their last opportunity, for some time at all events, of using their tongues. Who was supposed to do the listening I do not know, unless it was myself, but there was such a complete Babel that I could not make head or tail of what was being said. I was very glad to get back to my cell, for I was feeling far from well, and asked the warder of my corridor to get the hospital warder to bring me some of my medicine when he went his rounds. I had to make this request, as I was not allowed to have my bottle of medicine in my cell, it being against the rules for any prisoner to keep his own physic, but at stated intervals during the day the hospital warder went round the cells with a basket full of bottles, and measured out to each man on the sick-list the portion of medicine prescribed by the surgeon, and waited till he had seen the man swallow it. At the Xshire Prison this rule was not carried out, but any medicine prescribed by the doctor was given to the prisoner, and it was thus left entirely to his own discretion whether he chose to take it or not. I think that the rule ought



to be strictly enforced in all prisons, as it is far better that the doctor should know for certain that his medicine was daily taken, otherwise a man with some slight ailment, and desirous of being idle, and getting hospital diet has only to pour his medicine down his closet, and say that he is still ill, and the doctor, finding him no better, would, of course, be deceived. Bottles, too, can be broken, and employed by men to commit serious injuries on themselves, and such a case did actually happen (as I shall hereafter relate) while I was at the Xshire Prison. There ought to be a strict rule laid down, however, that hospital warders, when going their rounds, should provide themselves with at least five or six gallipots or small tumblers for giving the men their respective doses in, otherwise the taking of medicine becomes a fruitful source of spreading disease. At the Z—— Prison, as far as I could see, they only had one little gallipot, and all doses were measured into this, so that by the time the hospital warder had nearly completed his rounds the last three or four men on the sick-list had a fair chance of catching pretty nearly any disease. It was a dirty, slovenly way of doing things, and as there are always in prisons a large number of venereal

cases, skin diseases, and other disgusting complaints, it ought not to be tolerated for a moment. The fact is, that the medical regulations want to be thoroughly investigated and revised by competent men, or, at all events, the prison Commissioners ought to insist upon the existing regulations being carried out to the letter.

The following morning I was early astir, and was all dressed and ready when the warder came to tell me it was time to start for court. On coming down into the prison yard I was glad to find that Black Maria had disappeared, and in her place there was quite a respectable-looking carriage and pair. The governor was, as usual, in the yard, looking to see that all was correct, and, on receiving a word from him, I and the two warders stepped into the carriage.

On my way up I learnt that there being only myself and one other prisoner remaining to be tried, it was not thought worth while to get out the van, so the carriage had been ordered instead, and having deposited the other man at the court-house, they were now ready to marshal me up there. On arriving at the court the warder told me I could walk up and down the yard if I preferred that to going into my

usual sentry-box, informing me at the same time that I should be wanted up in the court before many minutes to plead guilty or not guilty to the indictment against me.

I gladly accepted his proposal, and strolled round the yard, delighted to get a little fresh air, and to obtain the time to quietly collect my thoughts before the coming ordeal. My enjoyment was, however, very short-lived, as in less than ten minutes one of the warders came up and told me that the judge had arrived in court, and that I should have to go up and plead. Telling me to follow him, he passed along the row of cell doors, and, opening the last one, ordered the inmate out, and told him to lead the way to the court. Up the stairs we went, and in a couple of minutes I found myself standing side by side with my companion in the centre of the crowded court. The sunlight streamed dimly through the stained glass windows, and for a moment everything seemed to fade from my sight, but, with a determined effort, I pulled myself together, and as I did so became gradually conscious that an antediluvian-looking old chap in a black gown and grey wig was howling out my name, and demanding, in the name of our Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria, that I should

plead guilty or not guilty to the charges preferred against me.

I entered my plea of Not Guilty, and the old black-gowned gentleman began shouting at the other man. The fellow was accused of some petty swindling business, obtaining a few shillings and a meerschaum pipe from a lodging-house keeper, but, from the long legal rigmarole the clerk of the court was howling out, one would have thought that the man had committed all the crimes in the Decalogue.

In the middle of the old gentleman's harangue the governor of the prison, who is always furnished with a desk and seat beside the dock, leant across and whispered to me that I could go down to the yard again, as my case was the last on the list, and I should not be required for the next hour or so, as the present case would take some time.

I was only too glad to avail myself of the permission, and retired post-haste, followed by one of the warders, who told me that he should have to put me into a cell, as he was required in court, and could not leave me exercising in the yard as that was against the regulations. There was no help for it, and once more I found myself vainly endeavouring to think of some means of passing the time. It luckily

struck me that I had a number of letters in my pocket that my solicitor had brought in for me on different occasions, and that it would be advisable to be prepared for the worst, and and now destroy them, as, were I convicted, and the letters found on me, the solicitor would have got into very serious trouble, Government not approving of solicitors increasing their incomes in this way. I had not very long to wait, as they soon polished off the other case, sentencing the man, who was an old offender, to seven years penal servitude. I heard him grumbling about the lies the police had told, as the warder placed him in the adjoining cell to mine, but his complaints were suddenly cut short by the warder slamming the door in his face, and telling him to keep quiet or he would get into trouble. A few moments later the warder unlocked my door, and telling me to follow him, led the way up to the court. The formal preliminaries had only been gone through, when the hour arrived for the Court to adjourn for luncheon, and I was handed down to my quarters, pending the return of the learned judge.

I inquired whether my dinner had arrived, but could get no tidings of it, and the warder feared there had been some mistake in the

ordering of it. I was a good deal annoyed, as I had had nothing to eat since eight o'clock that morning, and the prospect of having to pass the next three or four hours in a hot and crowded court, and in a state of great mental anxiety, was not at all a cheering prospect. The governor, however, was exceedingly kind, for, on hearing that my dinner had not arrived, he sent me round part of his own luncheon—a cup of coffee and some biscuits, and a message to the effect that he could not send me anything more substantial, as that was all he ever had sent up to him. I had barely time to finish my frugal repast before the warder came to tell me that the Court was reassembling, and that my presence was required. I soon saw that things were likely to go very hard with me, for I had been idiot enough to suppose that the police would tell the truth, but the local inspector and sergeant no sooner got into the witness-box than I began to find out my mistake, and when it came to Captain Jones, the Chief Constable's turn, he drew the long-bow himself with even greater rapidity and coolness than the others. The only one of the police concerned who appeared anxious to tell the exact truth was the lowest in rank, the constable White, whom I have mentioned before,

as having been sent down with the warrant when I was detained by Captain Jones, and I have no doubt he got a good wiggling from the inspector for doing so ; at all events, I know that he was fined 10s. very shortly afterwards for some alleged breach of discipline. The fact is, that the present police force in England requires to be thoroughly reorganized, and placed on altogether a different footing, and until this is done there will be every kind of injustice perpetrated.

My counsel, who managed the case exceedingly well, seeing that he had been abominably misinstructed by the local solicitor I had employed, struggled manfully against these unexpected difficulties ; but I could see by his face that he began to think very badly of the case.

All trials are more or less alike, and mine dragged along with the usual monotonous, formal routine, but the end came at last, the summing up was over, the jury had retired, and all one had to do was to wait for the verdict. A quarter of an hour, half an hour, three quarters of an hour slowly passed, and still there was no sign of the jury. The learned judge was getting very impatient ; he was staying at a fashionable watering-place some



thirty miles off, and was evidently afraid of missing the 5.20 train and getting late for his dinner, and I began to fear that if he did, and the jury eventually returned a verdict of guilty, he would take it out of me by passing a severe sentence.

Slowly, hideously slowly the moments passed, and it wanted but five minutes of the hour, when a shuffling of feet and opening of doors, coupled with the low murmur that went round the court, brought home to me that the jury had at last agreed, and that my long hour of suspense was at an end. A few moments later the jurymen entered their box, and the foreman quietly said "Guilty." The learned judge, after a few grave, earnest words, passed a sentence of twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour, and all was over.

The loud shuffling of many feet told me that the public were hurrying out of court, while the crowd of barristers that had filled the tables beneath me bustling off to the robing-room brought a faint conviction to my mind that all was finished; but, dazed and confounded, I still stood in the front of the dock, looking straight before me into vacancy. A barrister's black gowned arm was suddenly stretched over the railing of the dock, and a sheet of note-paper

was thrust into my hand, which I mechanically seized hold of and put into my pocket, and a second or two later the governor roused me by laying his hand upon my arm and whispering quietly but firmly,—

“Go down the stairs—don’t stop here ; you’ll be better directly.”

Instinctively I turned to obey, and got down the stairs somehow or the other, though to this day I have no idea how I did, and the first thing I remember is finding myself in my little cell in the yard, with one of the warders at the door telling me in a rough but kindly voice to cheer up and pull myself together, as it might have been worse.

I tried to take his advice, and, helped by the fresh air blowing upon my face, gradually collected my thoughts, and prepared to sit down on the little bench. The warder, seeing I was better, closed the door, and, remembering the paper that the barrister had given me, I thought it better to profit by the opportunity of being alone, and see what it contained and then destroy it. I had only just finished tearing up the paper when the door was unlocked, and the governor appeared in the doorway with a warder behind him, who was carrying my dinner on a tray.

“Your dinner arrived after you had gone up into court,” said the governor; “the people made a mistake and took it up to the prison, and it had to be redirected on here, but you can have it now if you like. You must, however,” he continued, “eat it now, as I shouldn’t be able to allow you to have it when we got back to the prison.”

Eating, just at that moment, was about the last thing I should have thought of; but I felt that it was a kindly act of the governor to come and give me the chance of having one more decent meal, so I told him I was much obliged and I should be very glad to have it.

“All right,” said the governor, “only look pretty sharp, because I shall have to be sending you back directly.”

The governor then left, and the warder came in with the tray and placed it on the bench, saying,—

“My missus has managed to keep it warm for you, and now try and eat all you can, for you’ll feel the want of it before many days are over.”

I determined to take his advice and do what I could, but I didn’t make much of a hand of it, and when the old warder came back to take away the tray and to tell me that we should be

starting for the prison in a few moments more, he looked quite distressed at what he evidently thought was my extreme foolishness in not taking advantage of my last chance of a good meal.

Shortly afterwards my door was again thrown open, and the warder, motioning to me to follow him, stepped forward, and unlocking one of the other cells, led out the man who had been convicted in the morning, and telling us to fall in side by side, he and another warder escorted us across the yard, then through the barrister's robing-room, and passing through a side-door, we found ourselves on the pavement outside the court-house, where a carriage and pair was awaiting us. The warder opened the carriage-door, the other prisoner and myself seated ourselves with our faces towards the horses, the two warders took their seats opposite, and away we went.

My companion in misfortune bitterly complained of the conduct of the police, and, from my own experience, I expect he had ample reason to do so ; and my suspicions were fully confirmed by some correspondence relating to this very man that afterwards fell into my hands while employed on office work at the Xshire Prison.

This man, whom we will call Richards, had undergone a sentence of twelve months' imprisonment for theft in the Xshire Prison some two years previously to this, and all the papers relating to him had afterwards to be examined by me, and I naturally perused them with considerable care and interest. While Richards was waiting trial, the governor of the prison had applied to the local inspector of police for information concerning him, and in reply received the following letter :—

“ SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 8th instant, containing inquiries about the previous history of the man John Richards, and in reply beg to enclose list of previous convictions, namely :—

“ Derby Sessions, 1860, 4 months' hard labour.

“ Derby Assizes, 1862, 6 months' hard labour.

“ P——borough Sessions, 1867, 3 months' hard labour.

“ He has been living round this part of the county for the last two years, working at his trade as a painter. We have obliged him to move about from place to place, for we have no doubt he belonged to a gang of burglars that

infested this part of the county some ten years ago, and we didn't want him to begin his games again. If I can find out anything else against him, I will let you know ; but I hope you have got a good case against him this time, and will get him put out of the way for some time to come.

“ I have the honour to be, sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ Y—— M——

“ Inspector Xshire County Constabulary.”

This was strong secondary evidence of the truthfulness of Richards' complaint, that the police would not give him a chance of leading an honest life, and when they got anything against him were not at all particular as to whether the evidence they gave was strictly true or not, so long as they managed to get him convicted. In fairness to the police, however, I must state that I made careful inquiries about Richards from the warders both at the Z—— and Xshire prisons, and got a shockingly bad character of him from both places as an idle, foul-mouthed, utterly worthless blackguard, but how far the police had conduced to this result by not allowing the man a chance of earning an honest livelihood is another question.

Having digressed thus far, there are one or two points relating to the treatment of prisoners awaiting trial that I should now like to touch upon before commencing the narrative of my experiences as a convicted prisoner.

First in importance, as being, perhaps, one of the things most needing reform, let me go into the question of the food supplied to prisoners awaiting trial. From the dietary I have previously given it will at once be seen by any thoughtful person (and by thoughtful person I mean any one who will take the trouble to consider the quantity and quality of food which an ordinary individual consumes in the twenty-four hours) that the daily quantity of food there allowed is decidedly inadequate. In considering the quantity of food the quality must also be borne in mind, and it must be recollected that it is of the coarsest description.

Take the bread : it is made of equal parts of coarse flour, bran, sharps, beans, and potatoes. This conglomeration produces a material of the taste and appearance of damp sawdust, and when only half-baked, as was frequently the case at the Xshire Prison, and ornamented by an occasional blackbeetle or two, was certainly exceedingly nauseous. I am bound, however, to say that at the Z—— Prison,—where the



quality of the materials used was better, the flour being sifted through a finer sieve than at Xshire, and the cook made to do his work properly,—the bread, although coarse and decidedly wanting in nutriment, was not unpalatable or unwholesome.

Again, with regard to the gruel, one ounce of oatmeal to a pint of water is a very small allowance, and when one remembers that the gruel is made in a large copper, a sufficient quantity being made at the one time for all the men in prison (convicted and unconvicted), it will readily be understood that the cook has to throw in at least two or three extra gallons of water to allow for waste in cooking and insure there being a sufficient quantity. This being the case, it will also be easily seen that the pint of liquid gruel served to each man contains even less oatmeal than the miserable one ounce allowed by Government.

Now, it is absurd to suppose that six ounces of this mixture called bread, and a pint of liquid gruel can be a sufficient breakfast or supper for a full-grown man.

Again, with regard to the dinners. Sundays and Wednesdays four ounces of this bread represents a piece about the size of a quarter of an ordinary French roll, two small potatoes,

and a small wedge of suet pudding, consisting of a half-boiled mixture of flour and water, with lumps of suet in it as big as the tops of your thumbs. Mondays, six ounces of bread, seven ounces of white haricot beans, and three-quarters of an ounce of fat bacon ; now what is the good of three-quarters of ounce of bacon ; let any one weigh that quantity out and see how much it represents, and I think they will agree with me that it is the height of tantalization to place such a meal before a hungry man. Fridays, the same quantity of bread, two medium-sized potatoes, and three ounces and three-quarters of very inferior Australian meat. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, the same quantity of bread and potatoes as on Sundays and Wednesdays, and three-quarters of a pint of soup.

The soup was supposed to contain two ounces of meat, two ounces of peas, and one and a quarter ounces of vegetables per pint, but this was entirely suppository, as I never found even half an ounce of meat in my soup, and the vegetables consisted of three or four strips of cabbage leaves and sometimes half a very small onion. It tasted unlike any other pea soup that I had ever come across, and when repeated three times a week, week after week

and month after month, was simply unbearable.

Now this dietary is not sufficient to keep a man in ordinary health and strength; it may be sufficient to sustain life, but that is all. I speak from personal experience. I know that after four days of this diet I became so weak that after taking a few turns round the exercise ground I have been obliged to lean against the wall for support, so much did even this slight exertion tell upon my weakened frame.

I had all my life been accustomed to eat a very small quantity of food, having always had a very small appetite, and therefore if I could not get on there must have been something radically wrong with the diet.

Now, a man waiting trial is, in the eyes of the law, an innocent man, and at least 20 per cent. of the men committed for trial either have the bills against them thrown out by the grand jury or are acquitted; but whether or no, a man has no right to be half starved until, at all events, he is proved guilty. It is all very well to say that a man can buy his own food and live like a fighting cock if he likes, but this looks suspiciously like one law for the rich and another for the poor, though I don't for one moment wish to imply that it is unjust of the

Government to allow a man to provide his own food if he can afford to do so, for the kind of food I have described must naturally be much more nauseous and repugnant to a man brought up in luxury than to a day-labourer, and be therefore a far greater punishment to the former than the latter.

It is frequently urged by members of Parliament and others that the class of men who ordinarily find their way to prison never have been accustomed to good food, and this is perfectly true in many cases ; and I have used this argument myself to several prisoners, but the reply I invariably got, if vulgar, was unanswerable.

“Quite true, sir, our food is rough, but we get a bellyful of it ; here it’s very rough, and we don’t get as much in a day as we should cut at one meal when we are out of prison.”

It is manifestly unfair, if not inhuman, to keep a man for two months or more on this diet ; then send him for trial, and in the event of his being convicted and sentenced to any term not exceeding four months to reduce his quantity of food by one half, and oblige him to do eight hours a day hard manual labour on the treadwheel and six hours a day oakum or coire-picking. No constitution would stand

this kind of thing with impunity, and the seeds of future disease must be sown.

I don't wish for a moment to suggest that men awaiting trial should be fed upon the fat of the land, but simply that such slight alteration should be made in the existing dietary as would enable men to maintain their health and strength : for example, that the dietary should be altered to the following :—

*Breakfast and Supper.*

|                           |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Bread 8 ozs.              | } Daily. |
| Gruel 1 pint, or          |          |
| Cocoa $\frac{1}{2}$ pint. |          |

*Dinner.*

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Bread 8 ozs.       | } Sunday, Monday, |
| Potatoes 8 ozs.    |                   |
| Cooked meat 6 ozs. |                   |
|                    | Wednesday, and    |
|                    | Friday.           |
| Bread 8 ozs.       | } Tuesday,        |
| Potatoes 8 ozs.    |                   |
| Soup 1 pint        |                   |
|                    | Thursday and      |
|                    | Saturday.         |

The difference in cost between the above dietary and the one at present in use would be very trifling ; or if the expense were made a pretext for maintaining the existing dietary, it might easily be obviated by making the increased dietary conditional on the prisoner performing daily a certain amount of coire-picking, mat-making, or other second-class labour.

In this way Government would actually save

money, for at present men awaiting trial do no work of any kind, and consequently Government gets no return whatever for the food supplied. It would also be infinitely better for the men, both morally and physically, than cooping them up, as at present, with no occupation whatever, and leaving them day after day and week after week with nothing but their own idle, evil thoughts with which to pass the time.

Now, with regard to men who are prepared to pay for their own food. It seems to me a great pity that Government does not make some arrangement by which men wishing to do so could be supplied with decent food at so much per day—say, five shillings, this of course to be exclusive of liquor. This arrangement might be carried out either by allowing the prison cook to provide and cook the provisions, he taking, of course, the profits in payment for the extra work this plan would entail upon him, or the prison authorities should make a permanent arrangement with some hotel or eating-house situated close to the prison to supply the food at a fixed tariff. At present men are completely at the mercy of the shopkeepers, who are thus enabled to ask any price they like for most indifferent food, and in many places

bribe the warders to bring them the prison custom.

The amount of exercise allowed to men awaiting trial is another thing that requires careful inquiry into. The regulations, I believe, only allow a man half an hour per day; but small as this quantity is, it is usually curtailed to a quarter of an hour. When it is borne in mind that the men are shut up in small cells, where there is no possibility of taking any exercise, with nothing whatever to do, and the ventilation, as a rule, as bad as it can be, every candid person must allow that even half an hour's exercise a day is a totally inadequate quantity. There ought to be allowed at least an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon. A convicted prisoner is allowed an hour a day; surely the unconvicted man is entitled to, at all events, equal consideration.

The regulations regarding letters sent or received, and visits paid to men awaiting trial, might also, I think, be greatly modified. At present men are obliged to receive their friends' visits in the ordinary visiting-cell constructed for convicted prisoners, and which I have previously described. A warder walks up and down the centre compartment the whole time,



and the prisoner cannot even shake hands with his visitor.

Now, there are many cases in which a magistrate would accept bail if the man had sufficiently substantial friends willing to come forward on his behalf. In some instances the friends are afraid to come forward, and in others they are willing enough to become security, but being perhaps only poor labouring men, are quite unable to find the amount required.

I would suggest that in all cases in which the committing magistrate was willing to accept bail the committing warrant should be endorsed to that effect, and the prisoner then be allowed to see his friends in an ordinary room, where he could shake hands and talk with them in some degree of comfort, and that the warder should be placed out of earshot, but of course in such a position as would enable him to see that no packages or money were handed from one to the other. He should also be allowed to write and receive letters without their being opened by the authorities. If the commissioners feared that money or other things might in this way be forwarded to the prisoners, a rule might be made requiring the prisoner to open the letter in the presence of the official, handing it to him in such a way that the latter

might satisfy himself that the letter contained no illicit enclosure.

After all, it would merely be allowing a man to do openly what he now does privately by means of his solicitor; and considering the many privations a man has to undergo, simply because his friends are either unable or unwilling to become bail, it is not a great deal to ask that the slight modification I have mentioned should in future be permitted.

Finally I would point out that the present system of placing a name-card on the cell-doors of unconvicted men is a great hardship. These name-cards are placed in tin frames specially made for them and attached to the outside of the cell door. They have written on them the name and christian name of the prisoner, his age, religion, alleged crime, trade, and date of the coming assizes or sessions, as the case may be, at which he is to take his trial.

In this way each man knows all about every other man waiting trial, for they are bound to pass each other's cells going or returning from exercise and chapel; and not only this, but the various convicted prisoners employed in cleaning the prison corridors are made equally aware of all the facts concerning any particular man they may feel any curiosity about.

Many of the men sent for trial, as I have previously stated, are acquitted; but by this name-card system how many people become, quite unnecessarily, acquainted with the fact that they have been in a prison, and it will be easily understood what a field for blackmailing this might open to an unscrupulous scoundrel. Let us suppose a case. Imagine a man committed for an offence of which he is eventually acquitted, and going off to some other part of England and earning for himself a respectable position; then think of that man being recognized by some tramping rascal who had learnt all particulars about him from the name-card on his cell-door while he (the tramp) was a convicted prisoner in the same prison. What a life this rascal might lead him; for what would not a man do to prevent his present respectable friends from knowing that he ever had been in trouble? While the prisons were in the hands of the county authorities these name-cards had simply the initial letters of the man's name and christian name, his trade, and the date of his trial, and it seems to me that if a return were made to this system of initials only it would be infinitely better for all concerned.

Now let me once more resume the thread

of my narrative, and commence the history of my experiences as a convicted prisoner.

We drove rapidly back, and on arriving at the prison were received in the entrance-hall by the chief warder. The senior warder in charge of us handed the papers concerning us to the chief, and after briefly running his eye over them to see what sentence had been passed on us, he rang a bell on the right-hand side of the hall, which quickly brought the receiving warder on the scene.

Pointing to Richards and addressing the receiving warder, the chief said, "Take the convict down, search, and change him;" and then, turning towards me, continued, "Pass the prisoner up to his previous cell, there will be no time to change him to-night, and I will come up directly and give further orders about him."

Let me here explain for the benefit of the uninitiated that there is a considerable difference between a convict and a prisoner. Only men who are sentenced to penal servitude are called convicts, and they are simply kept at a prison while the governor notifies the authorities of the fact that he has a convict in his prison, and receives in reply the necessary orders and instructions to forward him to one

of the London penal establishments—either Millbank or Pentonville; some of the prisons send to one, some to the other. These formalities generally take about a fortnight, and during that period the convict is not looked upon as an ordinary inmate of the prison, nor treated in the same way. The rules, dietaries, and all other regulations of a convict establishment differ entirely from those of a prison, and are supposed to be far less severe in the latter. I say supposed, because I made numerous inquiries among the men at the Xshire Prison who had tried both, and they were unanimously of the opinion that five years penal servitude was preferable to twelve months' hard labour. A man cannot be sentenced to more than two years' imprisonment with or without hard labour, but for different offences he might of course be sentenced to two years for the one offence and a further two years for the other, the second term to commence at the expiration of the first. He would thus have to undergo four years' imprisonment, and as there is no reduction made for good conduct as there is in penal establishments, the man would have to undergo every day of the four years. This sentence of four years' imprisonment is said to be the severest punishment, with the exception

of death, known in the English law. I have heard on very good authority that a learned judge, I think it was Baron Bramwell, after passing this sentence upon a man, turned to the high sheriff and remarked, "I have only passed that sentence twice before; in the one case the man died, in the other he went raving mad; and I believe it is a sentence that no man can survive and retain his senses."

But to resume, I followed the warder into the prison and up the staircase to my old cell, and on arriving there he said,—

"I don't suppose you will be allowed to stay here to-night, but till I get orders from the chief I don't know what arrangements he intends making; in the meanwhile I have some other work to attend to, and I advise you if you have any food left (with a quiet nod towards some sandwiches and cheese that I had on the shelf) to eat it up as quick as you can; have a regular good blow out, and stuff down all you can, for, my word, you'll soon feel the want of it."

It was a good-natured hint and kindly meant, and I thanked him gratefully for it. After his departure I tried to take his advice, but the excitement had left me in a perfect fever, and I could no more swallow the food than I could fly, and I gave up the attempt in despair.

In about half an hour's time the chief warder came up, accompanied by one of the assistant warders, and entered my cell.

"Well," said the chief, "I find there won't be time to change you this evening, so you will keep your own clothes till to-morrow, but I must move you into another cell."

"Very well," I answered; "can I take any of my things with me?"

"No," he said, "that would be against the regulations; you can only go with what you stand up in. Now, come along, for it's late and I have a great deal to do."

With a sorrowful glance at my brushes, comb, and other adjuncts of civilization, I followed him out of the cell and along the corridor to another cell a few doors lower down.

"Here we are," said the chief; "just let me have a look round and see that all's correct," and in a few seconds he scrutinized everything in the cell with a rapidity that only long habit could give. "There is a copy of the rules and regulations on the wall," he continued, "and if there is anything you don't understand or any further information you require apply to the warder of the corridor."

The assistant warder, who had disappeared



for a few moments, now entered the cell carrying a wooden board, which he placed in the iron bedstead, and which exactly fitted it.

“You have to sleep on a board without a mattress for the first twenty-eight days,” said the assistant.

“Stop a minute,” said the chief warder, “take that plank bed out again; the doctor has been his rounds to-day, and don’t you know that it is against the regulations to give a man a plank bed until the doctor has certified that he is in a fit state of health for it?”

So, to my no small delight, this uncompromising-looking plank arrangement was marched out again.

“Just turn out your pockets,” said the chief warder, turning to me, “so that I may see that you have nothing with you.”

I accordingly turned my pockets inside out one after the other, and the chief warder then departed, leaving me to try and realize my position to the best of my abilities. After a while I began to make a survey of the cell and see what kind of accommodation I was to have. I found it very much like the Xshire cells, the principal difference being that instead of a hammock there was a solid iron bedstead, weighing, I should think, about half a ton, with

a cradle kind of bottom to it, into which fitted a substantial straw mattress, and that the copper washing-basin was attached to the wall and had a tap of water laid out to it. The window also was larger, and being fluted glass instead of ground allowed considerably more light to enter, and also permitted one to see what the weather was like outside, which was a great advantage. I examined the bedding, and found a straw mattress of ample thickness, a couple of sheets of some coarse canvas-like material, two good stout blankets, and a thick kind of rug to do duty as a quilt, containing apparently all the colours of the rainbow. All the things were ornamented with rows of broad arrows in black paint, and each article had painted across it in large black letters H.M.P. Z——, these letters standing, of course, for Her Majesty's Prison, Z——. I found a piece of bath-brick, a couple of pieces of house flannel, and a small broom, neatly arranged in a row on the right-hand side of the door, while on the shelves on the opposite side were arranged the two mess tins, a wooden spoon, salt-cellar, towel, piece of soap, and some paper. These, with a wooden table, completed the furniture of the cell. Stool or chair there was none, and I afterwards found that the closet seat, with the

lid on, was supposed to do duty as a stool, an exceedingly bad arrangement, let me here state, for nothing would be more likely to produce sciatica or lumbago than obliging men to sit for hours together over water in this way, and it is a system that ought not to be tolerated for a moment. A Bible, Prayer Book, and Hymns Ancient and Modern were arranged upon the table, and above it were hung a copy of the rules and dietary.

I immediately turned my attention to the rules, as I was naturally anxious to gather some idea of what my position really was and the sort of treatment I might expect. I carefully brought away a copy of them with me, so am able to give them verbatim :—

L. P.  
D. 20.

ABSTRACT OF THE REGULATIONS  
RELATING TO THE  
TREATMENT AND CONDUCT OF  
CONVICTED CRIMINAL PRISONERS.

1. Prisoners shall not disobey the orders of the governor or of any officer of the prison, nor treat them with disrespect.

2. They shall preserve silence, and are not to cause annoyance or disturbance by making unnecessary noise.

3. They shall not communicate, or attempt to do so, with one another, or with any strangers or others who may visit the prison.

4. They shall not disfigure any part of their cells, or damage any property, or deface, erase, destroy or pull down any rules or other papers hung up therein, or commit any nuisance, or have in their cells or possession any article not sanctioned by the orders and regulations.

5. They shall not be idle nor feign sickness to evade their work.

6. They shall not be guilty of profane language, of indecent or irreverent conduct, nor shall they use threats towards, or commit assaults upon officers or one another.

7. They shall obey such regulations as regards washing, bathing, hair-cutting and shaving as may from time to time be established with a view to the proper maintenance of health and cleanliness.

8. They shall keep their cells, utensils, clothing, and bedding clean and neatly arranged, and shall, when required, clean and sweep the yards, passages, and other parts of the prison.

9. If any prisoner has any complaint to make regarding the diet, it must be made immediately after a meal is served, and before any portion

of it is eaten. Frivolous and groundless complaints repeatedly made will be dealt with as a breach of prison discipline.

10. A prisoner may, if required for purposes of justice, be photographed.

11. Prisoners shall attend Divine Service on Sundays and other days when such service is performed, unless they receive permission to be absent. No prisoner shall be compelled to attend the religious services of a Church to which he does not belong.

12. The following offences committed by male prisoners convicted of felony or sentenced to hard labour will render them liable to corporal punishment :—

1st. Mutiny or open incitement to mutiny in the prison, personal violence to any officer of the prison, aggravated or repeated assault on a fellow-prisoner, repetition of insulting or threatening language to any officer or prisoner.

2nd. Wilfully or maliciously breaking the prison windows, or otherwise destroying prison property.

3rd. When under punishment wilfully making a disturbance tending to interrupt the order and discipline of the prison, and any other acts of gross misconduct requir-

ing to be suppressed by extraordinary means.

13. A prisoner committing a breach of any of the regulations is liable to be sentenced to confinement in a punishment cell, and such dietary and other punishments as the rules allow.

14. Any gratuity granted to a prisoner may be paid to him through a prisoners' aid society, or in such way as the commissioners may direct.

15. Prisoners may, if they desire it, have an interview with the governor or superior authority to make complaints and prefer requests, and the governor shall redress any grievance, or take such steps as may seem necessary.

16. Any prisoners wishing to see a member of the visiting committee, shall be allowed to do so on the occasion of his next occurring visit to the prison.

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9—7. (621.)

I read these rules over several times and was struck by the extreme vagueness of them. There were, it is true, any amount of things that you were not to do, but not the slightest

hint as to what one might do. Rule No. 9 appeared to me to be particularly foolish; how on earth is a man to know whether the food is bad before he tastes it? Yet the rule carefully states that the complaint must be made “before *any portion of it* is eaten.” Now, a case came under my notice afterwards at the Xshire Prison in which a man was punished for acting as this rule directs. The man in question, William H. P——, was undergoing a sentence of nine months’ hard labour, and one morning, on receiving his breakfast gruel, immediately handed it back to the officer, who was serving out the breakfast, and declined to accept it, saying that it was sour and unfit to eat. The officer put the gruel on one side, and reported the man to the governor (all the reports are made in writing) stating that the man had refused to take his gruel, declaring that it was sour and unfit to eat without even tasting it to see whether anything was the matter with it or not. When the doctor came his rounds that day the gruel was shown to him; he tasted it, and declared it to be perfectly good, and the next morning the governor had the man up to his office, told him he had made a frivolous and impertinent complaint, as he had never eaten any of the gruel to see whether it was good or



not, and sentenced him to twenty-four hours' bread and water. The man afterwards told me himself that the gruel had for two or three mornings previously been very sour, and that on the morning in question it smelt sour to him, and, acting on the instructions given by the rules, he at once handed it back to the officer.

Rule 13 is another instance of extreme vagueness. You are told that you are liable to such "dietary and other punishments as the rules allow," but there is not the slightest explanation in any part of the rules as to what these punishments are, and it practically leaves the governor power to inflict any punishment he chooses, as a prisoner has no means of knowing whether the governor is acting according to the regulations or not.

At the Xshire Prison Rule 15 was utterly disregarded by the governor. On two occasions I applied for leave to see the governor there on mornings when he had not gone his rounds; on the first occasion the warder brought back word "that unless it was exceedingly pressing, the governor would see me the next day when he went his rounds," and on the second the message brought back to me was, "that the governor didn't see any prisoners in his office

now, but I could say what I wanted when he went round next day."

With regard to the chief warder, however, I am bound to say that he carried out the rule to the letter, and on every occasion that I asked to see him, and I did so several times, he invariably came down to my cell as soon as he conveniently could after the receipt of the message.

With regard to Rule 12, although not stated there, the regulation is that no man shall be flogged until he has been brought before the visiting committee of magistrates, and after hearing the offence with which he is charged, they have to make out an order authorizing the governor to give the man so many lashes, as he has no power of himself to order a man corporal punishment. The punishment may be inflicted either with a cat-o'-nine-tails or a birch, according as the magistrates may direct; the former, however, is usually reserved for very serious offences with the idea that the punishment is far more severe, but I was told in the prison that men who had tried both the cat and the birch, infinitely preferred the former. A prison birch is a formidable instrument, and bears no resemblance whatever to the birch of one's school-days. It consists of a stick some six

feet long, about the thickness of a man's wrist at the butt-end, and gradually tapering down to the size of your forefinger. The warder inflicting the punishment grasps the stick in both hands by the thin end, and standing off a good distance from his victim, brings it down full swing ; the force of such a blow must of course be tremendous, and far more likely to do a man serious harm than the cat.

I had no opportunity of examining a birch myself, but I carefully examined a couple of cats that had been sent down by the prison commissioners, and were the last new pattern. They did not appear to me to be very formidable weapons. One had a handle three feet long, and about the thickness of an ordinary broom-handle. It was covered with black baize and ornamented at the end, middle, and top by being whipped with bright yellow whip-cord. The butt-end was covered by a large red seal with the royal arms encircled by a scroll with "H.M. Prison Commissioners" on it. The lashes were about forty inches in length and were arranged in a neat circle round the top of the stock. They each consisted of a length of extra stout whipcord with ends neatly whipped with yellow silk to prevent them fraying while in use. The other cat was considerably shorter in the

stock, being only two feet in length, and was ornamented with scarlet and black baize and a yellow seal. The lashes were of exactly the same length and description as the other. I swung them through the air once or twice just to get some idea of what the punishment would be like, and my impression was that the momentary pain would be severe, but the probability of after-injury exceedingly small.

Flogging, however, ought, I am sure, only to be used as a last resource, and I think strict orders ought to be sent round to the different visiting committees to be exceedingly chary of inflicting this punishment. There are no doubt some brutes in human shape to whom you can appeal in no other way, but it is very rarely that you find them in prisons; they usually go to the penal establishments, having previously graduated in various gaols until they are reduced to the brutalized state I have mentioned above. In stating this I am not speaking rashly or thoughtlessly, but because I know that in the present prison system there are many rules and regulations, or rather I should say that there are many abuses the results of the manner in which the present regulations are carried out, that simply tend to crush all hope and better feelings out of the man, and until this is seen

and appreciated by the higher authorities, all hopes of reforming the criminal are useless.

The reformation of the criminal is now theoretically, and ought and must in the future be in reality, the one great object of our prison system. Men come into our prisons, as a rule, young in years and still more generally young in vice, and there is the opportunity of scotching at the outset the rank, pernicious growth of evil, and sowing the good seed that shall hereafter bear fruit an hundred-fold. The prison chaplain is, of course, a great power for good or evil in this way, but greater, far greater in reality, is the power of the individual warder under whose care the man is placed. If the warder works with the chaplain, the latter can do an immensity of good ; if he pulls against him, the chaplain can do little or nothing. By the warder working with the chaplain, I mean if he treats the prisoner kindly, patiently, and straightforwardly, and speaks, when he has the opportunity, a quiet word in season—and there ought to be special permission given to every warder to do this, as otherwise some chaplains get cranky and order the warders “to mind their own business, and let them mind theirs.”

There are at present in some of our prisons, warders performing their daily duties, and

quietly and unostentatiously doing an amount of good of which it is impossible to foresee the results—of which we never shall know the result—till that last great day when God shall reward “every man according to his works.” If, on the contrary, a warder bullies, swears, and illtreats the prisoner, all the worst passions are brought into play, the man becomes reckless and desperate, and all the efforts of the chaplain naturally fail; for remember that the warder sees the man every day and all day, while the chaplain sees him perhaps once in two months.

But I must return once more to my narrative. Having finished my study of the rules and regulations, I turned my attention to a board hanging on the other side of the gas-pipe, and read as follows:—

L. P.  
D. 76.

SYSTEM OF PROGRESSIVE STAGES  
FOR MALE PRISONERS  
SENTENCED TO HARD LABOUR.

1. A prisoner shall be able to earn on each weekday 8, 7, or 6 marks, according to the degree of his industry; and on Sundays he shall be awarded marks according to the degree of his industry during the previous week.

2. There shall be four stages, and every

prisoner shall pass through them, or through so much of them as the term of his imprisonment admits.

3. He shall commence in the first stage, and shall remain in the first stage until he has earned  $28 \times 8$  or 224 marks ; in the second stage until he has earned 224 more marks, or 448 in the whole ; in the third stage until he has earned 224 more marks, or 672 in the whole ; in the fourth stage during the remainder of his sentence.

4. A prisoner whose term of imprisonment is twenty-eight days, or less, shall serve the whole of his term in the first stage.

5. A prisoner who is idle, or misconducts himself, or is inattentive to instruction, shall be liable :—

(1.) To forfeit gratuity earned or to be earned.

(2.) To forfeit any other stage privileges.

(3.) To detention in the stage in which he is until he shall have earned in that stage an additional number of marks.

(4.) To degradation to any lower stage (whether such stage is next below the one in which he is, or otherwise), until he has earned in such lower stage a stated number of marks. As soon as the prisoner has earned the stated number, then, unless he



has in the meantime incurred further punishment, he shall be restored to the stage from which he was degraded, and be credited with the number of marks he had previously earned therein.

6. None of the foregoing punishments shall exempt a prisoner from any other punishment to which he would be liable for conduct constituting a breach of prison regulations.

7. A prisoner in the first stage will

(a) Be employed ten hours daily, in strict separation, on first class hard labour, of which six to eight hours will be on crank, treadwheel, or work of a similar nature.

(b) Sleep on a plank-bed, without mattress.

(c) Earn no gratuity.

8. A prisoner in the second stage will

(a) Be employed as in the first stage until he has completed one month of imprisonment, and afterwards on hard labour of the second class.

(b) Sleep on a plank-bed, without a mattress, two nights weekly, and have a mattress on the other nights.

(c) Receive school instruction.

(d) Have school-books in his cell.

(e) Have exercise on Sunday.

(f) Be able to earn a gratuity, not exceeding one shilling.

(g) The gratuity to a prisoner in this stage, whose sentence is not long enough for him to earn 244 marks in it, may be calculated at one penny for every 20 marks earned.

9. A prisoner in the third stage will

(a) Be employed on second class hard labour.

(b) Sleep on a plank-bed, without a mattress, one night weekly, and have a mattress on other nights.

(c) Receive school instruction.

(d) Have school-books in his cell.

(e) Have library-books in his cell.

(f) Have exercise on Sunday.

(g) Be able to earn a gratuity, not exceeding 1s. 6d.

(h) The gratuity to a prisoner in this stage, whose sentence is not long enough for him to earn 244 marks in it, may be calculated at one penny for every 12 marks earned.

10. A prisoner in the fourth stage will

(a) Be eligible for employment of trust in the prison.

(b) Sleep on a mattress every night.

(c) Receive school instruction.

(d) Have school-books in his cell.

(e) Have library-books in his cell.

(f) Have exercise on Sunday.

- (g) Be allowed to write and receive a letter, and receive a visit of twenty minutes, and in every three months afterwards to receive and write a letter and receive a visit of half an hour.
- (h) Be able to earn a gratuity not exceeding two shillings.
- (i) The gratuity to a prisoner in this stage, whose sentence is not long enough for him to earn 244 marks in it, may be calculated at one penny for every ten marks earned.
- (j) The gratuity to a prisoner in this stage, whose sentence is long enough to enable him to earn more than 896 marks, may be calculated at the same rate, provided that it shall not in any case exceed ten shillings.

(620) Printed at H.M. Convict Prison, Millbank. 9—7.

I was somewhat cheered by the perusal of these regulations, as it showed me that my condition gradually ameliorated, and the prospect of having books to read made the future appear more bearable, and it was with heightened spirits that I turned my attention to the dietary scale that hung in the centre, and read as follows :—

# DIETARY FOR CONVICTED CRIMINAL PRISONERS.

| NUMBER 1. |              |                                                              |                                                                          | NUMBER 2.                       |              |                       |                                                                |
|-----------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meals.    | When Issued. | Article.                                                     | Men, Women, and Boys under 16 years of age, with or without Hard Labour. | When Issued.                    | Article.     | Men with Hard Labour. | Men without Hard Labour, Women and Boys under 16 years of age. |
| Breakfast | Daily        | Bread                                                        | 8 oz.                                                                    | Daily                           | Bread        | 6 oz.                 | 5 oz.                                                          |
| Dinner    | Daily        | Stirabout (containing 3 oz. Indian Meal and 3 oz of Oatmeal) | 1½ Pints.                                                                | Sunday and Wednesday            | Gruel        | 1 Pint.               | 1 Pint.                                                        |
|           |              |                                                              |                                                                          | Monday and Friday               | Bread        | 6 oz.                 | 5 oz.                                                          |
|           |              |                                                              |                                                                          | Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday | Suet Pudding | 8 oz.                 | 6 oz.                                                          |
|           |              |                                                              |                                                                          |                                 | Bread        | 6 oz.                 | 5 oz.                                                          |
| Supper    | Daily        | Bread                                                        | 8 oz.                                                                    |                                 | Potatoes     | 8 oz.                 | 8 oz.                                                          |
|           |              |                                                              |                                                                          |                                 | Bread        | 6 oz.                 | 5 oz.                                                          |
|           |              |                                                              |                                                                          |                                 | Soup         | ½ Pint.               | ½ Pint.                                                        |
|           |              |                                                              |                                                                          |                                 | Bread        | 6 oz.                 | 5 oz.                                                          |
|           |              |                                                              |                                                                          |                                 | Gruel        | 1 Pint.               | 1 Pint.                                                        |

| NUMBER 3. |                                 |                                            |                                  | NUMBER 4.                                                      |                                 |                                            |                                   |                                                                |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meals.    | When Issued.                    | Article.                                   | Men with Hard Labour.            | Men without Hard Labour. Women and Boys under 16 years of age. | When Issued.                    | Article.                                   | Men with Hard Labour.             | Men without Hard Labour. Women and Boys under 16 years of age. |
| Breakfast | Daily                           | Bread<br>Gruel                             | 8 oz.<br>1 Pint.                 | 6 oz.<br>1 Pint.                                               | Daily                           | Bread<br>Porridge<br>Gruel                 | 8 oz.<br>1 Pint.<br>—             | 6 oz.<br>—<br>1 Pint.                                          |
|           | Sunday and Wednesday            | Bread<br>Potatoes<br>Suet Pudding<br>Bread | 4 oz.<br>8 oz.<br>8 oz.<br>8 oz. | 4 oz.<br>6 oz.<br>6 oz.<br>6 oz.                               | Sunday and Wednesday            | Bread<br>Potatoes<br>Suet Pudding<br>Bread | 6 oz.<br>8 oz.<br>12 oz.<br>8 oz. | 4 oz.<br>8 oz.<br>10 oz.<br>6 oz.                              |
| Dinner    | Monday and Friday               | Potatoes<br>Cooked Beef<br>(without Bone)  | 8 oz.<br>3 oz.                   | 8 oz.<br>3 oz.                                                 | Monday and Friday               | Potatoes<br>Cooked Beef<br>(without Bone)  | 12 oz.<br>4 oz.                   | 10 oz.<br>3 oz.                                                |
|           | Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday | Bread<br>Potatoes<br>Soup                  | 8 oz.<br>8 oz.<br>¾ Pint.        | 6 oz.<br>6 oz.<br>¾ Pint.                                      | Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday | Bread<br>Potatoes<br>Soup                  | 8 oz.<br>8 oz.<br>1 Pint.         | 6 oz.<br>8 oz.<br>1 Pint.                                      |
|           | Daily                           | Bread<br>Gruel                             | 6 oz.<br>1 Pint.                 | 6 oz.<br>1 Pint.                                               | Daily                           | Bread<br>Porridge<br>Gruel                 | 8 oz.<br>1 Pint.<br>—             | 6 oz.<br>—<br>1 Pint.                                          |

On Mondays, Beans and Fat Bacon may be substituted for Beef.

At the expiration of nine months, one pint of cocoa with two ounces extra bread may be given at breakfast three days in the week, in lieu of one pint of porridge or gruel, if preferred.

The following will be the terms to which the above diets will be applied :—

|                                                                                              |                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prisoners sentenced to<br>seven days and under                                               | } No. 1 diet for whole<br>term.                                         |
| Prisoners sentenced to<br>more than seven days,<br>and not more than one<br>month . . . . .  | } No. 1 diet for seven<br>days, and No. 2<br>for remainder of<br>term.  |
| Prisoners sentenced to<br>more than one month,<br>and not more than four<br>months . . . . . | } No. 2 diet for one<br>month, and No. 3<br>for remainder of<br>term.   |
| Prisoners sentenced to<br>more than four months                                              | } No. 3 diet for four<br>months, and No. 4<br>for remainder of<br>term. |

TABLE OF SUBSTITUTES FOR COOKED ENGLISH BEEF AND POTATOES, WHICH  
MAY BE ISSUED IF DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE AUTHORITIES.

|                                       | Colonial Beef or Mutton, Preserved by Heat. (Served cold). | Beans and Fat Bacon, both weighed after cooking. | American or other Foreign Beef, Preserved by Cold, weighed after cooking. | Cooked Fresh Fish. | Cooked Salt Meat. | Cooked Salt Fish. |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                       | ounces.                                                    | ounces.                                          | ounces.                                                                   | ounces.            | ounces.           | ounces.           |
| In lieu of 4 oz. Cooked English Beef, | 5                                                          | Beans, 9.<br>Fat Bacon, 1.                       | 4                                                                         | 8                  | 6                 | 12                |
| In lieu of 3 oz. Cooked English Beef, | 3 $\frac{3}{4}$                                            | Beans, 7.<br>Fat Bacon, $\frac{3}{4}$ .          | 3                                                                         | 6                  | 4 $\frac{1}{2}$   | 9                 |

(All Meats to be weighed without Bone.)

|                                     | Cabbage or Turnip-Tops. | Parsnips, Turnips, or Carrots. | Preserved dried Potatoes. | Leeks.  | Rice steamed till tender. |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
|                                     | ounces.                 | ounces.                        | ounces.                   | ounces. | ounces.                   |
| In lieu of 12 oz. of Potatoes . . . | 8                       | 12                             | 12                        | 8       | 12                        |
| In lieu of 10 oz. of Potatoes . . . | 7                       | 10                             | 10                        | 7       | 10                        |
| In lieu of 8 oz. of Potatoes . . .  | 6                       | 8                              | 8                         | 6       | 8                         |
| In lieu of 6 oz. of Potatoes . . .  | 4                       | 6                              | 6                         | 4       | 6                         |

(All weighed after Cooking.)



The dietary had rather a chilling effect, for, from my former experiences as an unconvicted prisoner, I was at once able to see that the diet was exceedingly scanty. I felt pretty certain that the medical man would exempt me from first class hard labour on account of the present state of my health, and determined on the first opportunity to find out what second class hard labour consisted of. Why on earth the authorities cannot state in the rules exactly what second class labour does consist of I cannot make out. It would give the prisoner the opportunity of knowing what he was obliged to do, and prevent cantankerous warders from unjustly treating men whom they happened to have a grudge against. This reticence on the part of the authorities continually leads to gross injustice and illtreatment of prisoners. Take for instance the case of men employed on the treadmill. Rule 7*a* simply states the number of hours per day that a man is to be employed. In the same way the rules concerning the Government regulations with regard to the treadmill, that the warder on duty at the wheel has to read out every morning, on the arrival of the men, and before they commence work, briefly amounts to this : 1. That men are not to attempt to communicate with one

another. 2. Not to look round when on the relieving seats or on the wheel. 3. Not in any way to mark the seats or woodwork. Nothing whatever is stated with regard to the time that a man is to be at work, or the time he is to have for rest ! The consequence is that an unscrupulous warder, with a grudge against a prisoner, can make that particular prisoner do double the work of any other man on the wheel, and in this way : the regulations at the Xshire Prison were that men should be fifteen minutes on the wheel and fifteen minutes off ; but as this arrangement was merely known to the warders and not to the prisoners, it was perfectly easy for the warder to keep any man he did not like on the wheel for an hour at a time, as no man may leave the wheel until ordered to do so by the warder in charge, and so all the warder has to do is to omit calling out the particular man's number when the ordinary changes take place. This is no imaginary proceeding, but was commonly and continually done by Humphrey if he happened to take a dislike to a man.

There are various other ways in which prisoners are imposed upon, as I shall in due course point out, that might be entirely prevented if the authorities would only plainly

state in the rules and regulations what the prisoners' punishment really was to consist of, or at all events give him some general idea, and not leave him, as at present, entirely at the mercy of any unscrupulous warder.

I was interrupted in my cogitations on the dietary by the entrance of the warder of the corridor, who came in and told me that the best thing I could do was to go to bed, as the bell would shortly ring.

"There ain't no sort of use bothering your head," he continued, "about what's happened; the only thing to do is to make up your mind to face it out."

"There are two or three things I cannot exactly make out in the rules here," I said, "and I wish you would just explain them to me."

"It's Saturday night, and I am very busy and have not really got the time to spare now," he replied; "but I'll come round to-morrow and tell you anything you want to know; and now take my advice, and go to bed and forget all about it."

The advice was kindly meant and decidedly good, and I forthwith proceeded to act upon it. Reaction had set in after the intense excitement of the last twelve hours, and completely worn out

I fell into a deep sleep, that lasted till the clanging of the rising bell awoke me at seven o'clock the next morning. I tumbled out of bed and tried to wash myself in the tiny basin provided for that purpose, but it was well-nigh an impossibility ; however, I did the best I could and got dressed by the time my breakfast appeared. This consisted of a tin of gruel and eight ounces of brown bread ; both were well cooked and as good, I believe, as it was possible to make them, when one considers the kind of material supplied.

Breakfast over, and it did not take me long, for I found it quite impossible to eat, I was left to pass the time as best I could. I paced up and down the narrow cell—I could just take four steps and then turn—and vainly tried to collect my thoughts and arrange my scattered ideas, but without success. Slowly, oh so slowly, the moments dragged away, till, a little after nine o'clock, the shuffling of many feet along the corridors roused my attention, and told me that the prisoners were being marshalled for some purpose or the other, and I began to wonder what it was for, and when my turn would come. I could hear the warders going along the corridors and the click, click of the locks as door after door was unfastened ;

nearer and nearer came the warder, faster and faster went the shuffling of the feet, and now and again I could hear the stern voice of a warder calling out sharply, "Look to your front, look to your front." I stood waiting for my cell-door to open, but the warder passed by my door and commenced opening those on the further side of me.

Gradually everything became perfectly quiet again, and some twenty minutes later the distant sound of loud singing told me that it was the men being passed to morning chapel that I had heard. Again and again the echoes of the old familiar hymn tune rose and fell as they floated down the long corridors of the prison, seeming to die away in the distance with a wail of despair; and well-nigh maddened by the old memories stirred within me, I looked about to see if there were any means of putting an end to the life which it seemed so useless to prolong. Vainly I searched about for some means of carrying out my project, and racked my brains to think of some expedient for effecting my purpose; but it was not to be, and after awhile I gave up the attempt, and the mad rage of excitement having passed, sat down upon the edge of the bed as weak as a child. How long I remained in this condition, and whether I

fainted, or became insensible, or what did happen I have not the slightest idea, but I was eventually roused by the entrance of the chief warder, accompanied by an assistant warder, and by the former laying his hand on my shoulder, saying,—

“Come, cheer up, and pull yourself together ; I am going to get your clothes collected and have them packed up, and shall want you to come and see that they are all correct, and that they agree with the list sent up from Xshire.”

I got up and collected my scattered senses as well as I could, while the chief ordered the assistant to go into the cell I had previously occupied and get all my things laid out on the bed ready for identification.

“Now,” said the chief cheerily, as soon as his attendant had disappeared, “you feel all right and able to come and see about your things, don’t you ?”

“Oh, yes ; quite, thank you,” I answered.

“You see I must get this done at once,” said the chief, “as I must have your present things off and your prison clothes on and your hair and beard cut before afternoon chapel, and there is little enough time. Now, come along,” he continued, leading the way out of the cell, “and we will soon see whether your things are right.”

I followed him along the corridor until I came to my old cell, and there I found all my things laid out and the assistant warder with the list in his hand seeing if everything was correct.

“Is it all right?” asked the chief.

“Yes, sir, as far as I can make it out it is; but there are of course several things short, and which I suppose he has on,” replied the subordinate, nodding his head in my direction.

“Just see if there is anything missing,” said the chief, turning to me, and I stepped forward and ran my eye over the things and told him that everything was right.

“Now,” said the chief, addressing the assistant warder, “pack everything up in the portmanteau, and if there is not sufficient room there make a parcel of what you have to leave out, and see that it is properly done up and sealed before it goes down to the clothing ward.” Then turning to me, he said, “Come along; we’ll go back to your cell now and get you changed into the regulation dress.”

I followed him back to the cell, vaguely wondering what sort of a get-up I was going to be put into now; but my suspense was short-lived, for on arriving at my cell, I found my bedstead covered with a collection of light chocolate-coloured clothing, and not presenting half such



an *outré* appearance as I had at first expected. There was a probation warder in plain clothes in my cell, accompanied by a sharp-eyed cockney-looking little fellow, got up in a suit of clothes that made the things prepared for me look quite respectable in comparison. Imagine, if you can, a suit of clothes made up of a combination of dark chocolate and the brightest canary yellow, arranged in alternate patches, the front half of one trouser-leg yellow, the back half chocolate, and in the other leg the front half chocolate and the back half yellow, and a jacket and waistcoat to match ; the costume being finished off by a light brown Scotch cap of enormous size, with a fancy pattern in white thread wandering over it. I gazed at this apparition in silent amazement, but he was not apparently the least abashed, and greeted me with a broad grin as he advanced obsequiously towards the chief warder, but evidently impressed with the idea that the chief could do very little without his assistance. He had a large pair of scissors in his hand, and clicked a kind of accompaniment with them, as he addressed himself to the chief warder.

“ I have got all the clothes ready, sir,” he said ; “ size No. 5, as you ordered ; but I couldn’t tell about the boots until I had seen about the length, sir.”

The chief looked at my feet, and said to him, "Go down and bring up a pair of sevens and a pair of eights. You go with him," he continued, turning to the warder; and away went brown-and-yellow, gaily clicking his scissors, and the warder at his heels.

"Now," said the chief to me, "just let me see that he has brought up everything right, and then you jump into them as quick as you can and get it over. Here we are!" he continued, taking up each article as he mentioned it, and looking it over with all the quickness of a practised hand—a flannel vest, ditto drawers, check shirt, worsted stockings, garters, trousers, waistcoat, jacket, cap, neck-tie, and handkerchief. "Quite correct! They are all perfectly new, so don't be afraid of them; and then when they bring back your boots the barber can cut your hair."

"Is that little chap in the wonderful suit the barber?" I asked.

"Yes," replied the chief, "he is the prison barber, and has the care of all the clothing under the superintendence of the receiving warder."

"Why does he wear such a wonderful suit of clothes?" I asked, as I slowly and regretfully divested myself of my own civilized apparel.

"That is the dress that felons have to wear,"

replied the chief; "misdemeanants wear these brown things," pointing to my clothes; "and naval and military prisoners dark grey. Now, I daresay you would like to be alone while you change," he continued, "so I will just go round and see if your things are being put up all right," and off he bustled, leaving me to finish my toilette.

I came to the conclusion that the sooner I got the job over the better, and, quickly throwing off the rest of my clothes, seized upon those provided for me. The vest and drawers were both apparently of first-rate flannel, and were ornamented with red stripes running longitudinally about a foot apart, and had the letters H.M.P. painted in black across the breast of the vest and the front of each leg of the drawers; the shirt was of blue check of the very coarsest description, and fastening at the neck and wrists with pieces of tape in lieu of buttons, and the usual three letters in black across the chest. The stockings were of coarse worsted, and made in alternate stripes of blue and black, and were decidedly the most respectable looking articles in the whole get-up. A couple of pieces of white tape were supplied as garters. The trousers were made of some rough flannelly kind of cloth, and the jacket and waistcoat of the same kind of material, but

apparently of a slightly superior description ; they were all of a dark chocolate-brown colour, and covered over here and there with the usual H.M.P., but done in white paint, which produced rather a startling effect till you became used to it. The cut of the trousers was of a strictly nautical descripton, with large flaps in front ; and the jacket, made something like an ordinary Eton jacket, just reached to the hips. A square of some coarse blue and check material, about the size of a small teapot-stand, did duty as a handkerchief ; and a narrow piece of brown flannel, with two strings of black tape to fasten it with, figured as a necktie. The light brown cap I have already described completed the costume, and although I had no looking-glass, I felt pretty sure that the *tout-ensemble* was hardly likely to prepossess an impartial observer in favour of the wearer.

I was still vainly endeavouring to imagine what kind of figure I cut, when the door opened, and the chief came in to know if the rest of my own clothes were ready to be packed up. I handed them over to him with rather a rueful countenance, I suppose, as he said,—

“Come, cheer up, you don’t look at all bad ; and now we’ll get your hair cut, and then it will all be over.”

“ But am I obliged to have my hair cut now ? ” I asked ; “ because I shall be sent back to the Xshire Prison to-morrow morning, and I should have thought they might have waited till I got there.”

“ You won’t go back there any more, you’ll stop here till your sentence is out,” replied the chief.

“ But the governor and chief warder both told me before I left Xshire that I should certainly go back there if convicted,” I said.

“ Oh, no, you won’t,” he replied ; “ you would have done so under the old county system, but now all the prisons are under Government it does not matter in which one you are, and the authorities won’t go to the expense of sending you all the way down there again.”

“ Well, but couldn’t you let me wait just for a day or two till we see what is going to be done ? ” I asked.

“ No,” he replied, “ it’s impossible : the governor has given orders that your hair is to be cut, and it must be done.”

There was nothing for it but to resign myself to my fate, although it was very vexatious, as I had private reasons for feeling pretty sure that I should be sent back to Xshire, and I did not at all relish the idea of having to perform a long cold journey with all my hair cropped off. I

was, however, left scant time for reflection, as the assistant warder returned, accompanied by the little barber, the latter carrying a couple of pairs of a kind of rough Oxford shoe in one hand, and gaily snicking away with his scissors in the other.

“There you are,” he said, throwing the shoes down at my feet; “see which of ’em suits your trotters best.”

The shoes were made on a large scale, and evidently intended not to pinch one’s feet in any way, for although one pair suited me pretty well as to length, I really think I could have got both feet into one shoe with a very little trouble.

“I can’t get you nothin’ nearer than them,” said the barber; and so I laced up the pair I had got on, and said I could manage with them all right.

“Shall I get ’is ’air off?” asked the barber of the warder; and on receiving a reply in the affirmative he seized hold of the wooden table, laid it sideways on the floor, and said to me, “Now stick yourself on the edge of it ’ere, and I’ll very soon do your job.”

“Am I obliged to have it cut very short?” I demanded of the warder; but the little barber evidently meant to make the most of his opportunity of talking, and immediately answered my question,—

“As close as the scissors can go ; them’s the governor’s orders,” said he ; and the reckless way in which he proceeded to slash away at the top of my head left me little reason to doubt that he meant to carry his orders out to the letter. “Ave you never been in here before ?” asked the barber.

“No,” I answered rather sharply, for I did not at all appreciate the impression conveyed in the question.

“How long ’ave you got ?” was the next question.

“Twelve months.”

“Oh, you’ll soon do that,” said the barber. “I am doing eighteen months, and ’ave only nine more to do now.”

I felt in anything but a good humour, and grunted a surly “Oh ;” but then it struck me that I had better make use of the opportunity to get what information I could about the work, &c., that had to be done, so I said, “Is the work hard ? and what has one to do ?”

“Ave you got hard labour ?” asked the barber.

“Yes,” I replied.

“Oh, well it ain’t nothing particular hard,” he answered ; “you’ll ’ave to go on the wheel at first, but you’ll soon get used to that, and



you'll 'ave to pick a bit of oakum of an evening and that ain't nothin' at all."

"You don't seem to have very hard work to do," I said.

"No; I had the good luck to know this present governor, and chief warder before, and when they came 'ere I got this billet. I did the first three months of my sentence here under the old governor, while the prison was under the county," he continued, "and if the Government hadn't taken the prisons over I should ha' been dead long afore now. Lor' bless ye, them was times! the gruel was all sour, the soup nothin' but greasy water, and if you made any complaint the governor gave you twenty-four hours on bread and water. Why, for the whole three months I never even saw the face of the man next to me; whenever we left our cells we had to put on masks. When this present governor came 'ere and 'ad us all paraded before him the first thing he said was, 'Right about face with them masks;' and lor' I was glad; and didn't I and the other coves just stare at one another. We didn't even 'ave no regular open-air exercise; we was just put into little yards, with high brick walls all round, and walked up and down one at a time;" and at the thought of his many woes he started away at my head in such a hideously reckless manner that I involuntarily bobbed, and

requested him not to vent his indignation on my scalp.

“Bless your 'eart,” he said ; “don't you be afraid—why I cut twenty and sometimes thirty men's 'air a day. There you are,” he continued, as he gave a few finishing touches to my unfortunate head ; “now let's get this beard of yours off, and then you'll be right—‘up to dick.’”

I passed my hand over my head, and found that he had literally cut the hair as close as the scissors could go, and the top of my head felt more like a stiff nail-brush than anything else. He next proceeded to snip away at my beard, and in a very few moments my chin matched my head. I felt exactly as if my head had been dipped in a bucket of ice-water, and thought ruefully of what a fearful cold in the head I might look forward to.

“Will my hair be kept short like this ?” I asked.

“No,” replied the warder ; “it will be cut every three months ; but will not be cut the last three months of your sentence, and in this way you get six months' growth before you go back to the outer world.”

The man spoke with a strong German accent, which rather surprised me, and on my asking him whether he was a German or not he told me that he was. He was at

present doing his three months' probation before being placed on the regular staff; but it seemed to me rather a curious idea to employ foreigners in the prison service, and not at all an advisable thing to do frequently. I was never brought in contact again with this particular warder, so had no opportunity of seeing how he performed his duties; but on this particular occasion he allowed the barber to talk away to me as much as he pleased, though I believe it was entirely contrary to the regulations. The chief now came bustling back, and I remarked that the barber was particularly careful not to say anything to me while he was present, and after quietly looking me over from top to toe said cheerfully that I should do nicely—a statement that I was not at all inclined to endorse.

“Take the barber down again,” said the chief, addressing the assistant warder; and as soon as they had departed he turned to me and said,—

“Now, come along; I am going to move you into another cell, and then all your changes will be over for the present.”

He lead the way along the corridor, and turning to the left entered B corridor, floor 3, and passing down to nearly the further end of it came to a stop at cell No. 10.

“Here you are,” he said; “it’s a nice bright cell, and you have all the morning sun, and must try and get along as well as you can. I am very sorry, really very sorry for you, but you can understand that we are obliged to be strictly impartial here.”

He spoke with a hearty, earnest ring in his voice that told me he really meant what he said, and I thanked him as well as I was able, and asked him if he could give me any idea what work I should have to do.

“It will all depend on the doctor,” he replied; “he’ll come round to examine you presently; but from what I have seen of your medical papers, he is sure to certify you unfit for first class hard labour, and will most probably limit your labour in the second class, and then all you will have to do is to pick a little oakum, and then by-and-by I daresay you’ll like to learn how to make a mat. The first twenty-eight days of your sentence will be the worst,” he continued, “for you will be obliged to stay in your cell all day, as prisoners are not allowed any exercise till the first four weeks are over.”

“I see in the rules,” I said, “that at the expiration of three months prisoners are eligible for employment of trust in the prison: what does that consist of?”

“Oh, that means cleaning the prison, helping the cook, and all that kind of thing, and I am afraid you wouldn't be much of a hand at that; but it also means doing copying and accounts for the clerk's office, and I daresay the governor would employ you at that by-and-by,” he replied.

This was indeed good news, and I eagerly asked whether there was usually plenty of writing to be done, and he said,—

“Oh, yes; we generally have somebody employed at it. Now take my advice,” he continued, “and try and forget entirely who you are and simply think of yourself as number B 3.10, which will be the official number you will be known by in the prison, and once you get used to the place the time will soon slip away. And now I must be off; but if there is anything you want at any time let me know, and I will help you as far as the prison rules and regulations permit.”

It was said in a frank, hearty manner, and I felt instinctively that he was a man I could implicitly trust to be as good as his word. His advice to me struck me as being exceedingly good, and I determined to act upon it at once, and do my best to lose all remembrance of my real self, and look upon my late self as really, as well as civilly, dead. The chief had only

left me a short time when the big hospital warder opened my door, and showed in a tall, dark young fellow in plain clothes, who marched into the middle of my cell and informed me with a rich Irish brogue that he was acting-surgeon, as the regular doctor would not be able to come up to the prison that morning.

“I’ll be jist doing the examination ov yiz, any way,” he continued; “and thin the dochtor will be knowing jist what to do with yiz whin he does see ye. Now, have you any chronic complaint at all? any varicous veins, rupture, or anything av that kind?”

“The only thing I have got is heart complaint,” I replied.

“And quite enough too. Now, will ye jest open your waistcoat and shirt? and I’ll soon see what’s wrong.”

I proceeded to do as he desired, and he in the meantime produced a huge stethoscope, and while he screwed it together stared fixedly at me as though I were some rare curiosity in which he was deeply interested. Having adjusted the instrument to his satisfaction he carefully examined my chest and heart, and after sundry probes and prods, and numerous oracular shakes of his head, said, “Hum! ah! jist so; I shall jist report the case to the dochtor;”

and with a parting injunction to me not to be frightened (why, wherefore, or what at, I have never yet been able to imagine), and to take care of myself, he marched off again, leaving me, I must own, rather mystified. I had not much time for reflection, however, as a few minutes later my trap was banged down, a voice shouted out, "Dinner," and a couple of tins were passed through, which I took and laid on my table. On examination I found that the larger tin, which was made in the shape of a teacup, and would hold, I suppose, about two pints, contained my eight ounces of suet pudding and four ounces of bread; while the other tin, which was about the size and shape of a middling-sized flower-pot saucer, held my eight ounces of potatoes. I got my spoon and took the pudding out and had a look at it:—my goodness! it did certainly appear to be filling at the price, and heavy enough to make the mere inspection of it sufficient to cause one to think with horror of the nightmare that would ensue if one were brave enough to swallow it. I tried a mouthful or two of it just to see what it was like, but that was quite enough, and though in after-days I was often faint and weak with hunger, and tried hard to eat it for the sake of keeping up my strength, I never could manage



to get much of it down, and when I did, invariably suffered for it afterwards. My eight ounces of potatoes consisted of two fair-sized ones, and were well cooked and excellent in quality. That the potatoes served to the prisoners should be thoroughly good, the cook had orders to cut each potato fairly in half before it was boiled, and any potato with the slightest sign of badness was to be at once rejected. In this way the prisoners invariably got good potatoes here, but at Xshire, where this order was not known, I have over and over again had half my allowance of potatoes unfit to eat. Where the food is extremely scanty this is a great hardship, and the authorities ought to impress upon all governors the necessity of strictly carrying out this regulation, as it was never done at the Xshire Prison, and on a future occasion, when I happened to ask Watergate, the chief warder there, why their potatoes were not prepared in this way, he told me that no such order had ever been issued to them. Whether this was true or false I had of course no means of discovering, but it was a very funny thing that such an order as this should be issued to one prison and not to another. The bread served to me was also well cooked, but the materials were evidently

of the coarsest, and I only tried a mouthful or two of it. I had not long concluded my various tastings and testings when my trap was again banged down, and a voice shouted, "Tins out." I passed mine through the narrow aperture and slam up again went the little trap-door, almost catching my fingers, although I pulled them back as quickly as possible. The sunshine played in fitful gleams across the walls of my cell, and through the narrow grated window I could see the heavy clouds hurrying rapidly by, while occasionally a smart shower of sleet would come pattering against the glass, and I became so thoroughly depressed and dejected that I really believe I should have gone out of my mind if I had been left much longer to my own reflections. Luckily, assistance was at hand in the shape of the good-natured hospital warder, from whom I learnt that it was his Sunday on duty, and who came to tell me that the bell would ring for chapel in about a quarter of an hour, and that I should have to attend.

"When you hear the bell ring get your books and stand ready," he continued, "and then when I unlock your door walk out, turn to the right, and follow the man in front of you; when you get to the chapel there will be

plenty of officers there to tell you what to do next. Oh, and mind you don't forget to take your number with you."

"My number, what's that?" I asked.

"Why there it is," he said (pointing to a small square of tin which was placed against the wall, and was painted black, with figures and a letter printed on it in white paint, and a small leather strap at the top with a narrow slit in it); "and remember you are never to go anywhere without it. You see it has got B 3.10 painted on it. B for the corridor, 3 for the floor, showing you are on the third floor, and 10, the number of your cell. That strap you see at the top," he continued, "is to fasten it on to your jacket button when you go out to exercise; but when you go to chapel carry it in your hand, for as soon as you get inside you'll have to hang it up on a nail in front of the box you sit in. Now I must be off to ring the bell, for that's two o'clock striking."

I mechanically took up the comb to dress my hair before going to chapel; but on attempting to pass the comb through my hair the illusion was soon dispelled, for the barber had done his work so conscientiously that there was nothing to comb. I washed my hands, however, as I was determined to make some sort of a toilette;

and then, with my books in one hand and my tin number in the other, stood ready to march forth, for the rapid opening of the doors and the shuffling of feet, growing nearer and nearer, warned me that it was time to be prepared. My turn soon came, the door was flung open. "Chapel; keep three paces behind the man in front of you," shouted the warders, and leaving my cell I quickly followed the men in front of me who were hurrying rapidly along the corridor. Warders were stationed at various points along the different corridors, in order to prevent any attempt at talking amongst the prisoners, and periodically shouted out, "Keep your distance; look to your fronts."

The entrances to the chapel were situated at the junction of the three corridors, each three floors having their own entrance, so that there was no going up and down stairs, but the men walked one after the other to the end of their corridors and poured in steady streams into the building. It was arranged in tiers of boxes, the general plan being much the same as that of the chapel at Xshire, but the plan of the boxes was infinitely superior, saving an immensity of trouble to the warders and greatly facilitating the speedy arrangement of the men.

The doors of the boxes, instead of being formed of the backs, were formed of the sides, and opening outwards lay back against the seats, leaving a clear passage to the end of the line.

The first prisoner to enter the tier walked to the extreme end of it, and then drawing the side after him formed the door that completed the box. A narrow wooden ledge prevented the door being pushed against him, and the boxes being, if possible, even narrower than those at Xshire, the next man's body kept the door firmly fixed in its place. In this way tier after tier was rapidly filled, the men following each other in quick succession, and each, after completing his box, hung his number-plate on a nail that was placed for that purpose on the outside front of it.

When a tier was completed a warder closed and locked the last door of the row which opened on to the broad passage that ran longitudinally down the centre of the chapel, and there were the men all safely packed like herrings in a barrel. On leaving, of course, the man next the passage left first, the man next to him (there being no ledge on the reverse side of the door) pushed his door back parallel with the seat just vacated, and so on in succession until the last man in the row walked

up the clear passage once more formed by all the doors being laid back as at first. The governor, chaplain, and chief warden were placed in a high gallery facing the prisoners. Wooden armchairs raised on iron pillars were distributed about in various parts of the chapel, and on these the warders sat with their backs towards the governor and chaplain and their faces towards the prisoners, and in this way commanded a perfect view of what every man was doing.

The floor of the chapel sloped downwards at a sharp angle, and the front of one tier of boxes formed the back of the next row, the ledge for one's books effectually preventing one from leaning over to look at the man beneath. At the bottom, on the right side, was a raised platform for the harmonium, at which the schoolmaster presided, and on the left a narrow gallery for the accommodation of the governor's family. The chapel was certainly hideous ; the bare whitewashed walls, the galleries painted a kind of dull grey, the unvarnished, unpainted rows of bare deal boxes, and the heavily-barred windows made up a picture more easily imagined than described.

The state of the boxes, too, was simply disgraceful. They were cut all over with men's

names, initials, dates, punishments, intermingled here and there with foul and horrible expressions. In some places holes were cut completely through the woodwork, enabling the man above to talk with the man below, and even the floors had not escaped in this general love of destruction. It is only right to say, in fairness to the present staff of warders, that none of the inscriptions or cuttings appeared to be of recent date; so, I presume, they were done while the prison was under the county authorities.

When one takes into consideration the commanding position of the warders' seats, and the consequent impossibility of a prisoner making the slightest movement without their knowledge, it is difficult to understand how such a state of things could have been arrived at, unless the warders persistently went to sleep during divine service. The discipline was strict enough now, and any movement on the part of a prisoner called forth a corresponding motion of caution from the warder in command of the particular tier, and a sharp reprimand at the conclusion of the service.

The seats were just as sloping and uncomfortable as those at Xshire, and kneeling, even had it been possible, strictly prohibited, the



prisoners being obliged, when not standing, to sit bolt upright, so that their faces and hands might be always under the surveillance of the warders, and thus any attempt at talking or the possibility of any written communications being passed from one man to the other was rendered well-nigh impossible.

I followed the man in front of me along the tier until he disappeared from sight by drawing his door after him and disclosed to view my seat, where I deposited my books, and, directed by one of the warders, pulled my side door to, leaving in succession the adjacent seat ready for the next prisoner, who was following me at the regulation distance. Nearly opposite my seat was placed one of the raised armchairs, and in this was perched a young probation warder, who looked the picture of self-importance, and scowled fiercely as he glanced along the three or four tiers that were placed under his surveillance.

The chapel was soon filled and the three entrances barred and locked ; the warders in their places, the schoolmaster started the voluntary, the chaplain, followed by the chief warder, entered the gallery, and the service commenced. It was considerably shorter than the usual evening service in church, the first lesson and

more than half the prayers being omitted. The chants were read, but a couple of hymns were sung. There being, however, no organized choir the singing was chiefly noticeable for its noise and the determined manner in which time and tune were alike disregarded. The harmonium rather added to the confusion than otherwise, as it was most fearfully out of tune, and the schoolmaster insisted upon playing each bar fully out in the slowest possible time, and seemed to consider the men being a bar or two in advance of him rather an advantage than otherwise. Some of the men had capital voices, and if the authorities would have taken the trouble to pick them out and have them trained once or twice a week, by the schoolmaster or some competent person, a most creditable choir might soon have been formed, and the choral portion of the service performed in a pleasing and decorous manner. Under the existing system it was simply a concatenation of hideous sounds; and by thinking the matter over it will easily be seen that this must have been the inevitable result.

Imagine between three and four hundred men and some fifty or sixty women shut up day after day, week after week, and forbidden, under the severest pains and penalties, to open

their lips, and then twice every seventh day being permitted to shout as loud as they please for about five or six minutes; you can then form some conception of the noise that was made and the temptation there was to make it—some conception, and only some, for nobody who has not actually experienced it can form any exact idea of the intense longing, the almost frantic desire that tempts one to shout at the top of one's voice after three or four months of enforced silence. There have been times when I have suffered to such an intense degree with this craving to shout out aloud that I have been obliged to force my handkerchief into my mouth to prevent myself yielding to the temptation. Is it any wonder, then, that on the one day in the week when this desire may be indulged in with impunity, that the most should be made of the few minutes allowed? With a good choir this shouting tendency could be kept within bounds, as, with a certain proportion of the men singing in time and tune, it would be an easy task for the warders to pick out any persistent squaller and induce him to moderate his zeal.

The plan of selecting a choir from amongst the prisoners was tried while I was at the Xshire Prison, and as I was selected to preside

at the harmonium I had ample opportunity of seeing how the idea worked. The schoolmaster there was a young fellow with a capital voice, and had been for some months in a good choir, where he had been properly taught, and having obtained permission from the governor, he went round the prison one evening trying all the men's voices ; and what a row there was that night ! talk about a cat's chorus ; it would have been the most perfect melody compared with some of the attempts at singing that were made on that occasion. Ultimately, however, he selected some sixteen men and boys with fair voices, and some idea how to use them, and with the governor's consent commenced having an hour's practice every Saturday morning. The men were delighted with this weekly opportunity of howling themselves hoarse, and some having really fine voices, and all being exceedingly anxious to do their best, in a few weeks we really had a very fair choir.

There was not the same necessity for a choir there that there was here, as there the chaplain had at his own expense got together a very good one, formed of girls living in the neighbourhood ; and whether it was jealousy on their part, or whether the governor interfered, I do not know, but just as our choir was beginning to

sing pretty fairly, and to really assist the old original choir, an order came down to stop practising, and our choir was disbanded. It was a great pity, as it certainly gave the prisoners concerned a greater interest in divine service, and brought new and holier thoughts into their sad, weary lives.

I saw enough to convince me how quickly and easily, with a little trouble, a fair choir could be obtained from prison material, and to feel still more convinced that the authorities would act wisely, and to the ultimate benefit of the criminal classes, if they ordered choirs to be formed in all her Majesty's prisons.

But to return to my present subject. As the service progressed I was struck with the unanimity and heartiness of the responses, but later experiences, unfortunately, taught me that this was not from any particularly earnest feelings on the part of the congregation, but the result of the strict silence enforced during the week. Prayers ended, the chaplain, whom I have already described, and who looked more than ever like an inoffensive and well-cared-for south-down sheep, commenced his sermon. He read it from a little blue-covered tract (let it be mentioned in his favour that he made not the slightest attempt at concealment, but held the

little book boldly up in his hands), and of all the discourses I ever listened to, I never heard anything to equal it. It commenced with a weird description of a gloomy church and snow-covered graveyard, with a realistic picture of glistening tombstones, skulls, and cross-bones. This opened the way for the appearance of a fearful ghost that seized the unhappy hero, as he was crossing the above-mentioned cheerful churchyard, and bore him down to Hades ; with a free and vivid description of the horrors of hell as a slight interlude. Next the ghost proceeded to show the hero why he had taken him to hell, and to explain to him that he (the hero) had been ruined, disgraced, and imprisoned through his own folly and wickedness; pointed out to him how he was scorned by all, and cast off and hated by those who were nearest and dearest to him ; and after meandering on in this cheerful strain for some quarter of an hour, and dilating upon the certain ultimate punishment of all sinners, he brought this improving discourse to a conclusion by quietly awakening his hero and making him declare that it was all a dream. There was no attempt at showing how the past might be redeemed—no hopes held out to the sorrowing penitent—all God's righteous judgments against per-

sistent, impenitent sin was set forth in its coldest and most merciless light, while His attributes of love, and the infinite mercy that forgives unto "seventy times seven" were never even hinted at. It was a sermon which, if preached in a fashionable London church, to a congregation composed of those who possess all the earthly means of making life enjoyable, would have sent a thrill of horror through their hearts, and started them homewards with a shuddering disgust of the religion held up to them. Fancy, then, the effect it was likely to have upon those to whom it was now addressed—some of them in prison for the first time, and with broken, contrite hearts, touched to the quick with the terrible result of hasty impulses uncontrolled, sudden temptations weakly yielded to, and whose aching spirits longed and quivered for some message of loving mercy, some gentle, kindly word of encouragement for the future. Think what it was to those grown hardened in sin, and of the utter recklessness it would produce. Think what it was to those who had never before heard of God—and there were some there to whom the Bible was an unknown book—and then wonder, as I did, what on earth could ever have induced any one with any knowledge of true religion to



write such a travesty of it; and wonder still more how any clergyman in his sober senses could have been found to make use of such, worse than nonsense, and above all in such a place as this. The chaplain of a prison wields an enormous power for good or evil, and the authorities ought to spare neither trouble or expense in endeavouring to obtain competent men. Here and there you find clever, earnest men doing their Master's work quietly, patiently, and persistently, ever striving by all means in their power to win souls to God, and sacrificing their whole lives to this one great object. Such a man was the chaplain at the Xshire prison: but such cases are, I fear, rare, very rare, and the way in which these appointments are at present made renders this necessarily the case. It is nearly always some relative or friend of the governor who gets the prison chaplaincy, and this is in itself a very great mistake as it almost certainly entails a man of very second-rate position, and besides binds him by ties of friendship and interest to support the governor in any course he may choose to pursue. Again the remuneration is, in most cases, exceedingly small considering the nature of the work to be done, and the numerous unpleasant and loathsome sights and

things a prison chaplain has to put up with. Here at the Z—— Prison I do not know what the salary was, but at the Xshire Prison it was 225*l.* per annum, and a house and garden. For this the chaplain had to perform two services on Sunday and a short daily service, keep a register of all prisoners, and visit the prison daily. There was no fixed regulation as to how often the chaplain was to see men, but whilst I was at the Xshire Prison a circular came down from the Home Office, of which the following is a pretty correct *résumé* :—

“ To the Governor of the Xshire Prison.

“ SIR,—H.M. Prison Commissioners request that you will supply the information required in the inclosure, and return it here without loss of time. Please see that the information is placed in the blank spaces left opposite each question for that purpose.

“ Your obedient servant,

“ R. ANDERSON,

“ Secretary.”

The following were the questions contained in the inclosure, and the answers supplied by the governor :—

“ Q.—State salary of the chaplain, and other

emoluments, and the average number of hours spent by him in the prison, exclusive of the time spent in performing divine service?

“A.—225*l.* per annum, and house and garden. About two hours daily.

“Q.—Average number of visits made weekly by the Roman Catholic priest, and yearly amount paid to him?

“A.—Visits the prison about twice monthly. None.

“Q.—Average number of visits made weekly by ministers of other denominations and yearly amount paid to them?

“A.—No regular visits made, but ministers are occasionally sent for at the special request of prisoners. None.”

The two hours daily spent by the chaplain in visiting prisoners in their cells was also exclusive of the time he had to give examining and filling up the criminal register that he had to keep; and of the time spent in examining and selecting new books for the library, so that, with the daily service he had to perform, the best part of his mornings and afternoons were fully employed. The chaplain had a private room near the governor's office, and as a rule arrived there in the morning at ten o'clock, and in the afternoon at three. At these hours the school-

master would be in attendance and inform the chaplain of the names of new arrivals, furnish the names of prisoners who had made special requests to see the chaplain, and have the name and number of the last man the chaplain had seen on his previous visit, so that he might know where to begin on the day in question. His week's work was usually arranged as follows:—Monday, morning and afternoon, he spent in visiting the female prisoners; of these there were only a very small number—the daily average being about thirteen—so that he was enabled to see them all on the one day. Tuesdays he spent from ten to eleven in the morning in visiting the men in their cells, retaining the afternoon for his own use. This time, however, was not spent in any relaxation, but was passed in attending to a charitable institution that he had founded in a neighbouring town. Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday he spent from ten to eleven in the morning, and from three to four in the afternoon in visiting the men in their cells. Thursdays, from ten to 11.15 in the morning, and from three to 4.30 in the afternoon, he spent in visiting the new arrivals; and as there were sometimes twenty or thirty of these requiring his attendance, it was always a very busy day, and for

this reason he was obliged to give an extra three-quarters of an hour to his work on Thursdays. Then there was the daily service in chapel, commencing at 11.40, and lasting for about a quarter of an hour; and on Sundays, two full services, no sermon, however, being preached in the afternoon, but to make up for this the chaplain had to come into the prison after evening service to see men that were to be liberated on the following Monday morning. From this slight sketch of a prison chaplain's duties—and it must be borne in mind that I have not here made any mention of the time that must frequently be given to thinking over individual cases, and planning some means of bringing the truth home to particularly obdurate hearts—it will easily be seen that his appointment is no sinecure. In addition, if we think of the extraordinary medley of characters which he has to analyze, the cleverly devised tales to be sifted, the canting hypocrisy to be unmasked, we shall understand the wonderful amount of tact, discrimination, and patience that go towards making up the character of that almost “Admirable Crichton,” a first-rate prison chaplain. When we take into consideration also the distasteful nature of the work, the con-

tinual contact and daily intercourse with the outcasts of society, the terribly painful and trying period that has occasionally to be passed in preparing and attending prisoners for execution, it seems absurd for Government to suppose that they can obtain the first-rate men required for the work at the exceedingly small salaries at present offered. The rules and regulations concerning chaplains also require alteration; at present he is far too much under the thumb of the governor, and it would, I am sure, be far better if he had a share in the direction of the discipline and management of the prison. This might, I should think, be easily managed, without any clashing of their several duties, by allowing the chaplain the power of discussing privately with the governor any particular case that seemed to him to require it, and in the event of their disagreeing on the matter, it might then be referred to the commissioner for the district; his decision, of course, to be final. Such an arrangement as this would greatly decrease the chance of prisoners being unfairly treated by warders, and give the chaplain a right to interfere where he considered it necessary to do so. Under the existing regulations any interference by the chaplain is always met by the quiet reply that

his duty is "to attend to the spiritual condition of the prisoners; questions of discipline or health being quite outside his province." This is a great mistake, because the chaplain, as a matter of fact, knows twice as much about the actual condition of the prisoners, and the real characters of the warders, as the governor. The very nature of his duties necessitates this; he passes the best half of his day with the prisoners, and moving about amongst them as he is at all hours, a tyrannical, ill-tempered warder, however careful he may be, is certain, sooner or later, to break out while the chaplain is in the prison. In addition to this, if there is any ill-treatment going on he is sure to hear of it, and his suspicions once aroused, a little careful supervision of the particular warder would soon show him whether the complaints of the prisoners were justified or not. At present, of course, the moment a prisoner commences any complaint about a warder, the chaplain is obliged to stop him at once by saying, "I cannot listen to you; I have nothing to do with the discipline of the prison, and any grievance you have must be laid before the governor for redress."

The alteration I have mentioned would enable the chaplain to listen to the complaints



and talk them over with the governor, and between them they would very soon be able to discover whether any ill-treatment was going on or not. The question of pay ought to be carefully gone into, and a fair stipend offered to really competent men ; and this might be the more easily managed as, since the prisons came under Government, the number of chaplains has been greatly reduced. Under the old system there were 132 chaplains and prison ministers, while under the proposed Government staff there are only to be eighty-seven.

With regard to the second clause of the circular, the average number of visits given there as made by the Roman Catholic priest was, I believe, considerably less than stated, though I can only judge from my own observations, as there was no register of his visits kept ; and I fancy the governor got a rap over the knuckles about this, for the circular was returned with a marginal note appended, asking whether more exact information could not be furnished with regard to the number of visits paid by the priest, either from the entries in the gate-porter's book, or the register of strangers visiting the prisoners supposed to be recorded in the clerk's day-book ; and the governor was obliged to confess that the clerk's

and gate-porter's books were so carelessly kept that there was no possibility of obtaining the information required. I have sometimes known the priest visit the prison four or five times in a month, and I have known him stay away for two or three months at a stretch. The number of Roman Catholics was small, the average daily number was only about eight; and when one considers that the priest has no pay whatever, and was, in addition, at the expense of coming from a neighbouring town, he was, I think, doing very well if he even came on an average of once a month. He was a pleasant, gentlemanly little man, and much liked by the Roman Catholic prisoners.

The third clause is one of great importance, and is at present the cause of a considerable amount of vexatious discussion. I do not know exactly what the private regulations issued to governors say about permitting Dissenting ministers to visit members of their congregations confined in her Majesty's prisons; but I believe governors are directed to allow them to make visits at due and reasonable intervals where prisoners desire it; and the clause referred to certainly looks as if such was the case, or why should it be supposed that money was paid to them? As a matter of actual practice, however, it depends

a good deal upon the governor and chaplain whether Dissenting ministers are admitted to the prisons, and at the Xshire Prison every possible obstacle was thrown in their way. The chaplain was an ultra-High-Churchman, and, like all people with extreme views, exceedingly bigoted and intolerant where Dissenters were concerned. It was his one weak point—nobody is perfect—and did him a great deal of harm, considerably weakening his influence, and defeating the very object he had in view—the desire to draw Dissenters into the Established Church. A Dissenting minister was a perfect eyesore to him, and of course he tried by all means in his power to prevent one entering the prison. The only Dissenting minister visiting the prison while I was there was the Bible Christian minister, and it was only after repeated requests made by a prisoner, and direct correspondence on the part of the minister with the prison commissioners, that he obtained permission to visit the man; and then he had to confine his attention to this particular man, although there were several other Bible Christians in the prison at the time.

In fairness, however, to the governor and chaplain, I must state that there was ample reason for their hesitating to admit a Bible Christian

minister to the man in question. This man, Charles C——, had been previously convicted and sentenced to twelve months' hard labour in this same prison, while it was under the county authorities, and on applying to a visiting magistrate had been permitted to receive visits from his own minister, Mr. J——. This minister was of course informed of the rules and regulations relating to people visiting the prison, and the conditions under which he would be allowed to attend the prisoner in question.

One would hardly, I suppose, expect much from the ministers of a sect that were content to call themselves by such an offensively ridiculous name, but one would at all events expect that they would keep their pledged word. In the present instance, however, I am sorry to say that this was not the case, and this Mr. J—— used to bring in letters and newspapers to the prisoner C——, and carry answers back to the man's friends.

The man who was at this time governor was a sharp fellow, and got a suspicion of what was going on; for C—— was such a fool that he never took the trouble to apply for leave to write to his wife when his turn for letter-writing arrived, and the governor gave the warder of the corridor orders to keep a sharp

look-out on Mr. J——. The warder, being himself a Dissenter, did not, I expect, care about seeing too much ; but C——, like an ass, bragged to another prisoner that he had a newspaper in his cell, and imparted a little local news to him. This prisoner passed the information on to a pal of his, who, proud of his knowledge, boasted of it to the identical warder. He went to C——'s cell and taxed him with the fact ; found the newspaper, and made him own that Mr. J—— had also been bringing him letters.

C—— earnestly begged him not to say anything about it ; and as C—— had only about another week to serve before the completion of his sentence, the warder, influenced no doubt by the desire to shield the Dissenting party, and happening to know that the minister in question was about to leave the town, consented to hold his tongue. When C—— was again convicted, and again obtained permission to receive visits from his own minister, this warder went straight to Mr. H——, who had succeeded Mr. J—— as Bible Christian minister, and informing him of the way his predecessor had behaved, told him plainly that if he again discovered anything of the kind going on he should instantly report the matter to the governor.

Mr. H—— at once replied that he should never have dreamt of lending himself to any such disreputable proceeding. Still, the fact remains that the former minister disgracefully violated the conditions upon which he was admitted to the prison, and it is therefore no wonder that the authorities are chary about giving admission to Dissenting ministers. Notwithstanding this highly instructive little history, I cannot help thinking that it would be a good thing if the Government would facilitate in every way the visiting of Dissenters by their own ministers.

Rule 19 of the old county regulations—"If any prisoner is of a religious persuasion differing from the Established Church, and no minister of that persuasion has been appointed to attend at the prison, the visiting justices shall permit a minister of that persuasion, to be approved by them, to visit such prisoner at proper and reasonable hours, unless such prisoner expressly objects to see such minister"—was an exceedingly wise one, and it is a great pity the Government did not continue it. The Church chaplains are far too much given to trying to proselytize Nonconformist prisoners, and thus greatly tempt them to hypocritically conform to their desires in the hope that the

chaplain will then obtain some little indulgence for them. In proof that this assertion is not merely an idle supposition of my own, I would mention that all the naval prisoners sent up from the neighbouring seaport, as soon as they arrived at the Xshire Prison, invariably declared that they were members of the Church of England. Now, I happened to know that a large proportion of the sailors on the flagship were either Presbyterians or Dissenters ; and as some thirty or forty naval prisoners were sent up every week, it struck me as rather a strange thing that it should only be Churchmen that misbehaved themselves ; so I thought it advisable to make a few inquiries about the matter, and learnt that, whatever a man was on board his ship, he was always a member of the Church of England when he arrived at the prison ; for, as my informant frankly owned, " If you ain't you can't do nothing with the *old man*," this being a nickname they had for the chaplain.

Now, I know that the chaplain never would attempt to obtain any indulgence for a prisoner ; and even had he tried to do so, would have been instantly snubbed by the governor ; still, you cannot get ignorant men to understand this, and it results in a great deal of useless hypocrisy.



All this kind of thing would be avoided by having ministers of the different denominations appointed to the various prisons, and placing the prisoners of these several denominations entirely under the spiritual control of their respective ministers. This is already in force with respect to Roman Catholics, the priest being authorized to say exactly what religious books shall or shall not be placed in the cells of Roman Catholic prisoners, permitted to hold special services for them, and empowered to caution the Protestant chaplain against discussing religious subjects with them. Why should not Nonconformists be placed on the same footing? Numerically speaking they completely outnumbered the Catholics (at the Xshire Prison thirty-five per cent. of the prisoners were Nonconformists and only eight per cent. Roman Catholics), and why should the minority enjoy privileges denied to the majority? Let Government invite the co-operation of the Nonconformists, and authorize duly appointed ministers to visit the prisons in their respective districts, and I feel certain that the invitation would be gratefully and heartily responded to, and result in great and lasting benefit to the criminal classes.

I am not advocating this in any party-spirit, for I am, and always have been, a member of

the Church of England, but simply because, from what I have seen and heard, I feel sure that good would result from such an arrangement as this. Black sheep, like Mr. J——, would be of very rare occurrence, and if it was plainly stated that any detected infringement of the rules and regulations would result in the withdrawal of the permission from the whole body of Nonconformist ministers, I do not think that the Government would have anything to fear on that score. At all events, I still maintain that the Nonconformists have a right to, and a right to claim, the same privileges as the Roman Catholics.

But it is quite time to return from my long digression and resume the thread of my narrative. Chapel ended, tier after tier was rapidly emptied of its occupants, and the men marched back to their cells in the same quick, orderly manner. The service had been a very short one, and by three o'clock I was back in my cell with five mortal hours to get through before bedtime, and nothing on earth to do. I paced up and down my cell till I got sick and giddy with the continual turning, and then set to work to re-examine the contents of my cell; but this was soon done, and I was once more driven to my three steps and overboard kind of

walk. About half-past four a little relief arrived in the shape of the doctor. The little man marched into my cell with his hat more than ever on one side of his head, and in his fiercest and most disjointed manner demanded how I was getting on.

I said, "Pretty well, thank you."

"I have had a medical report on your state of health from my assistant, who examined you this morning, and you will be exempt from first class hard labour, and be placed on hard labour of the second class, but not be tasked. Have you got that down?" he demanded fiercely of the big hospital warder, who was standing to attention at the door of my cell with a large slate in his hand upon which to make notes of any directions the surgeon might give with regard to the men, and to prevent any forgetfulness on the part of the warder.

"Yes, sir," meekly responded that stalwart veteran, scribbling away for dear life.

"Oh, you have got your bed, I see," said the little man, in a slightly modified tone, turning to me.

"Yes," I said, "they brought me the plank bed to lie upon last night, but the chief warder gave orders for me to have my mattress until

you certified that I was in a fit state of health to sleep on a plank."

"Oh!" said the little man; and then asked the warder whether the governor had given directions for me to have my bed.

"Only if you ordered it, sir," replied the warder.

"Well, I do order it—put it down. How do you get on with your food?" he asked, once more turning to me.

"Oh, I suppose I shall get used to it in time," I answered.

"Can you eat it?" shouted he.

"No," I said, "I cannot."

"What can't you eat?" he asked, more fiercely than ever.

"The gruel," I answered; "that kind of thing never did agree with me."

"Oh! Can you eat bread and milk?"

"Yes," I replied, "I have no doubt I could."

"Very well; I shall place you on white bread and milk." Then turning to the warder he continued, "Put down one pint of milk, morning and evening, in lieu of gruel, and white bread in lieu of brown."

"Yes, sir," said the warder.

The little doctor then said to me, "You must

be as careful of yourself as you can, you know the state of health you are in, and if you don't feel well, ask the warder of your corridor to place your name on the sick-list, and then I shall come round and see you."

"Thank you, sir," I said; and off marched the little man, with the big warder trotting meekly at his heels.

The doctor had no sooner left, than my cell-door was again flung open by a warder, who shouted, "Governor is going his rounds," and Captain —— walked in, looked me and the contents of my cell carefully over, said, "Are you all right?" and receiving a reply in the affirmative, walked out again.

These interruptions over, I once more resumed my monotonous promenade; but in a short time the slamming and banging of the trap-doors along the corridor told me that supper was being served, and a few minutes later the hospital warder entered my cell with a pint of steaming hot milk for me.

"Here's your milk," he said, "but you can't have any white bread till to-morrow, as the cook does not bake on Sundays."

I thanked him, and said that I could manage very well with the brown bread until the next day.

Placing the tin of milk upon my table he said, "I am going to take the plank out of your bed-frame, as the doctor has ordered you your bed, and it's a good job for you, for I can tell you that sleeping on a bare board ain't at all pleasant. You'll find the bed comfortable enough, you see," he continued, unrolling my bedding; "the mattress fits down into the bed-frame and keeps you nice and warm and comfortable, and if you don't understand how to make your bed I'll show you how to do it presently, as I shall have to come down to you after supper with some medicine the doctor has ordered you."

He bustled off, and I proceeded to try my new diet, which I found to be a decided improvement on the watery gruel. Supper over, my tins had to be washed out and put away on the shelf, ready for handing out the next morning. There were two sets of tins in each cell, and one of these sets was never allowed to leave the cell, but had always to be kept in its place (the centre of the top shelf), the other set was in daily use, and had to be cleaned after each meal, so as to be ready to hand out to the warder when he came round to collect the tins, for the following meals. Soon after I had finished supper, the hospital warder came into

me with his basket of physic, and selecting the bottle labelled with my number, poured the indicated dose into a little gallipot, and, handing it to me, watched me duly swallow it, and when I returned him the pot, carefully inspected it, so as to be quite sure that I had not failed to take the whole dose.

“When am I to go to bed?” I asked.

“The bell rings at eight o’clock for you to commence making your bed, and lights are turned out at 8.30,” he replied.

“Another hour and a half, at least, then, I have got to get through,” I said.

“I suppose you find the time rather long?” he asked.

“Long!” I said, “why every hour seems like twenty-four, and I begin to think this day will never end.”

“Well, as you are on the sick-list you can go to bed now, if you like. I suppose you know how to do the bed, don’t you?”

“Oh, yes, thank you,” I answered, only too delighted at the offer; “I’ll manage all right enough.”

“Very well, then, the best thing you can do is to get into bed as fast as you can.”

And away he went with his basket of bottles to dose the rest of his patients. I soon



got my bed made, and quickly divesting myself of my clothes, jumped in, and found it a very comfortable kind of bed, and a wonderful improvement on the Xshire hammock. The straw mattress was a good thick one, and picked over, as they are, about every three months, keep soft, and free from lumps. It struck me that an habitual criminal would do well to confine his attentions to the county of Z——, and so make sure of being sent to the Z—— Prison whenever the Fates were against him; for here he would be sure of a really comfortable bed every night, and escape the horrors of the hammock system. When one thinks of it though, it seems rather curious, now the prisons are all under Government, that the internal arrangements of one should be more comfortable than another; but then Government establishments are generally celebrated for eccentricities of management. The prison commissioners consider nightgowns are an unnecessary luxury, so one has to wear one's day-shirt night and day for a week; not a very pleasant or wise arrangement, but then the authorities imagine that they save two or three bars of soap a week by this piece of economy, quite forgetting to take into account the extra expense they are put to for drugs and disin-

fectants, entailed by the propagation of itch and other skin diseases brought about by this uncleanly regulation.

Nightgown or no nightgown, however, I was soon asleep, and so ended my first day in prison.

I was awakened at six o'clock on Monday morning by the bell, and a few moments later my trap was thrown open, and the warder impatiently rapped against the door, calling out,—

“Pass through your tins, can't you? or do you want to go without breakfast?”

I hastily jumped out of bed, and, seizing hold of my tins, placed them in the little trap-door; but the smaller tin was immediately pushed back, and the warder asked, “What are you up to now?”

“I thought you wanted my tins,” I said.

“Hulloa! are you a new-comer?” he asked, peering through the small aperture; and, on my answering in the affirmative, said,—

“Oh, all right, only pass your big tin out for breakfast; but I'll come round and see about you directly.”

I washed as well as I could, and had got about half-dressed, when my door was opened, and a warder entered, followed by a prisoner carrying a bucket of water.

The warder was a stout, young-looking man, not apparently more than seven or eight and twenty, with a broad, good-natured face, and dark brown whiskers and moustache. I do not know what his name was, but he was a capital good fellow, and very much liked in the prison.

After telling the prisoner to put down the bucket he turned and asked me if I knew what I had to do of a morning.

“No,” I said. “I hav’n’t the least idea. I didn’t see any instructions in the regulations.”

“Oh, very well,” he said. “Now, this man,” pointing to the other prisoner, “will do your cell up this morning for you, and you watch exactly what he does, so that you may be able to do it for yourself to-morrow. Now, the first thing,” he continued, “you have to do as soon as you are dressed, is to put your bed up for the day; and be careful and watch how the man folds the clothes, as the governor is very particular about the beds being put up correctly.”

At a motion from the warder the other man stepped forward, and, catching hold of the bed-clothes, stripped them off the bed, threw them on the floor, and then, taking hold of the

mattress at the foot, rolled it up into three folds; and, placing it at the top of the bedstead, pressed it tightly together.

On this superstruction he placed the pillow; then folding the counterpane neatly together he laid it along the centre of the pillow, and taking hold of one of the blankets told me to carefully watch how he folded that, as the governor was extra particular about the blankets, and you wanted to know the knack of doing them or you could never get them right. Taking the blanket at the end, he folded it neatly together, in successive layers of about fourteen inches in width, first forward and then backward, so that when he arrived at the further end the blanket was arranged into a succession of layers, altogether nearly twelve inches high. Placing this on the top of the counterpane, he treated the other blanket in the same way, so that by the time that was placed on its fellow the amount of blanket presented to the view of the casual visitor was considerable, and if content with a superficial observation of things he might have left the prison with the idea that the prisoners had blankets enough for the Arctic regions. The sheets, folded simply together like the quilt, were placed on the top of the blankets, and the process was complete. With the exception of

the elaborate arrangement of the blankets the idea was exceedingly good, as it enabled the warder to see in an instant whether a prisoner's bedding was complete, and prevented any possibility of concealing sheets or blankets for the purpose of escape.

My bed finished, the man got the little broom from behind my door and carefully swept the cell, brushing all the dirt into the left-hand corner, under the shelves; then replacing the broom, he picked up the piece of house flannel that was neatly folded up in a little bundle and placed with the other implements of cleaning behind the door in the right-hand corner of the cell, and tossing it into the bucket of water he had brought with him he moved to the top of the cell, went down on his hands and knees, and commenced washing the slate floor of the cell. He was evidently thoroughly well versed in scrubbing, and in a very few minutes had my cell washed out, and wringing out the flannel refolded and placed it behind the door. He took a look round, and seeing my towel on the table folded that into a tidy little bundle, placed it in the centre of the bottom shelf, and laid my spoon and salt-cellar on the top of it. Next he placed the two small hair combs on the top of the paper, and then placing the two new-looking

tins, that were never supposed to leave the cell, one inside the other, he pushed them up behind the towel and salt-cellar.

“That’s the regulation way,” he remarked; “mind you always keep them just like that, and whatever you do, don’t bring anything into your cell, not even a pin or a bit of string, for if you do you’ll get yourself into trouble, and the officer of your corridor too; won’t he, sir?” he demanded of the warder.

“Yes,” replied the latter, “that’s right enough; and,” addressing himself to me, “you be careful to remember that.” Then turning to the other man he asked if he had finished, and receiving an answer in the affirmative told him to return to his cell. As soon as the other prisoner had disappeared the warder said to me,—

“I shall bring him in to help you for another morning or two, until you get to understand the work, but you must pay attention and manage to do it for yourself as soon as you can. I am the officer of this corridor,” he continued, “and if there is anything you don’t understand, or if you have any complaint to make, let me know, and I’ll soon see about it.”

I told him I was much obliged to him, and mentally thanked my stars that I had got such

a decent fellow as my custodian, for I might easily have happened upon some blustering, bullying fellow, who, only too delighted at the chance of ordering about a gentleman, might have pretty well bothered my life out. There were one or two of this sort here, but they had to be exceedingly careful, as both the governor and chief warder put down any attempts at tyranny or ill-treatment with a strong hand.

“Can you tell me what work I shall have to do?” I asked.

“Well, you see, the doctor having exempted you from first class labour, and forbidden your being tasked, all they can give you to do at present is coir or oakum-picking, and they can’t make you do more of that than you choose; but the oakum master will be round soon after breakfast,” he continued, “and then you will see what he says.”

As soon as I had finished dressing I opened my ventilator, and found there was a fine current of air; and for the short time I stayed at Z—— Prison I always found my cell perfectly ventilated, and free from all effluvia.

When my breakfast arrived I found the white bread to be of first-rate quality, capitally baked, and a tremendous improvement on the regulation brown bread.



Breakfast over, I washed out my tins, and got them ready to hand out as soon as the warder should come round to collect them, which he usually did about twenty minutes past eight, breakfast being served at a quarter before.

The prisoners were allowed three-quarters of an hour for their breakfast, a bell being rung at half-past eight to warn them to recommence work, and any man found idling after that hour was reported.

Shortly after the ringing of the work-bell a short, thin, ferret-eyed, red-whiskered, disagreeable-looking warder came into my cell, with a basket filled with junks of tarry rope, otherwise called oakum, cut into lengths of about twelve inches, and intermixed here and there with squares of old cocoa-nut matting; selecting a piece of the latter that was about eight inches square he handed it to me, saying,—

“I am the oakum and fibre master, and it will be your employment to-day to separate the strands of this piece of matting, and then unravel and pull them abroad as fine as possible.”

Pulling one of the strands out he showed me exactly how he wanted it done, adding,—

“When you want another piece ring your bell and ask for it; but I expect this will be enough for you to-day, as you are not tasked, and are only to do what you are able to at present.”

I told him that I would do the best I could, and he went off to dole out oakum and fibre to others. He was a disagreeable, spiteful kind of fellow, this warder, but as I was not tasked he could not interfere with me; but he was, I believe, much disliked for his harsh, overbearing manner. He had been in the marines, and funnily enough, out of the seven or eight warders I came across who had served in that corps, I only found one decent man among the lot, and he was only employed temporarily for a short time while I was afterwards at the Xshire Prison. The others were all the same foul-mouthed, bullying, completely uneducated men, and totally unfit for any position of trust, and, least of all, fitted for prison employment. Sailors are never employed in the prison service; at least I never heard of one in it, and if I had my way I would take uncommon good care that marines never were either.

I had just settled down to my new employment, and was beginning to see how it was done when the warder in whose corridor I had

been while waiting trial came in, and told me to put on my cap and follow him, as I had to be paraded before the governor with the rest of the new arrivals. He led the way down the corridor to the spiral staircase, letting out a couple more prisoners as he passed along, and whom he ordered to fall in in single file, three paces apart. At the bottom of the staircase another party of prisoners, with the oakum master as escort, were awaiting our arrival, and received orders to fall in on the rear, and like a parcel of ducks going to the pond, away we went across the central hall of the prison, through the iron door on the further side, and into the passage that ran outside the governor's and clerk's offices. Here we were ordered to halt and form in line, and the warders passed along the front and rear of the line, seeing that every man was properly clothed and clean and orderly. This operation over, we were told to "stand at ease." Some minutes elapsed, and then the chief warder came out of the governor's office, and we were once more called to "attention" whilst he paced slowly down the line, looking each man carefully over as he passed along.

The chief had barely finished, when the governor marched into the passage with a blue,

official-looking paper in one hand, and a pencil in the other.

At his entrance the warders immediately stood to attention, and saluted, while the chief advanced towards him, saluted, and spoke a few words to him in a low tone. I do not know what their conference was about, but, at its conclusion, the governor, with the chief at his heels, passed along the line, narrowly examining every man. He then returned to the head of the line, and asked me the following questions :—

“What’s your name? your trade? and what sentence have you got?”

As soon as I had replied to the questions he made a mark with his pencil on the sheet of paper he carried in his hand, and, passing on to the next man, he repeated the same questions, and so on to the end of the line.

I do not know what the object of this was, but it was always done. The governor then returned to his office with the chief, and a few moments later the latter returned, and said to the oakum master,—

“Quite correct, march the men back to their cells.”

The oakum master duly saluted, and then shouted out, “Attention! left turn! march!”

and away we went back to our respective cells.

On my return I set to work again at my fibre-picking, and had a good pile shredded out by the time dinner arrived. This fibre is used for filling door mats with, and has to be pulled out very fine, or it will not do.

My dinner looked a precious small one, though it sounded a good deal on paper; but the three-quarters of an ounce of fat bacon, and the table-spoonful of haricot beans, flanked by a small roll of bread, looked a very sorry meal when it came to be set before one. I, having twelve months' imprisonment, was, of course, placed on third class diet for the present, but could look forward at the completion of four months of my sentence to being placed on fourth class diet, and receiving a whole ounce of bacon, and nearly two tablespoonfuls of beans; it wasn't a great improvement, still, it was some amelioration, and cheered one up to think that things would get better as time went on.

During the afternoon I had a visit from the chaplain; he walked meekly into my cell, stared silently at me for a few moments, until I felt inclined to ask him what on earth he wanted, and then softly said,—

“What’s your name?”

I told him, though what he asked for I do not know, as he knew my name and who I was perfectly well.

“Have you been taught your catechism?” was his next question.

“Yes,” I said, “when I was a child.”

“And you have been instructed in your Bible?”

“Yes,” I said, “I have been.”

Then there was another long pause, during which he blinked solemnly at me like some respectable old barn owl, and finally hazarded the suggestion,—

“That I had been leading a very reckless life, he was afraid.”

“Not more reckless than other people,” I replied, half-defiantly, for I was bothered and worried with the man and his manner, and everything about him.

“Ah! perhaps not, perhaps not,” he answered; and then, after another pause, during which he alternately gazed first at me and then at the ceiling, he suddenly said, “Good-day,” and marched out.

When I came to think the interview over I could hardly help laughing, the man’s manner and appearance were so exceedingly ludicrous;

but, if mine was a sample of what usually happened when he visited prisoners, I don't fancy that much good was likely to be the result of his visits.

About half-past seven in the evening the oakum master came round, attended by a prisoner with a big sack, and carried off the fibre I had picked, placing the remains of what I had left unpicked outside my door, ready to hand into me again on the following morning.

I asked him if it was picked correctly, and he replied,—

“Yes; it will do well enough; but you don't seem to have overworked yourself.”

“Well, I have been at it all day,” I said, “with the exception of the short time I gave to my meals.”

“Oh, well, you are not tasked, so it's no matter,” he replied.

He looked as though he greatly regretted he had not the power to task me, and I have no doubt he would have made it pretty hot for me if he had only had the chance. He did what he could however, for the next day he took away my coca-nut fibre and started me oakum-picking, which was considerably harder work and far more unpleasant, as the tar got all over your hands and kept you in a most disagreeably



sticky condition. He did not give me any instructions as to how I was to set about pulling to pieces the tarry junk of rope, some eight inches long, that he threw into my cell, with the injunction "to get as much done as I could and see how it suited my fingers."

I knew that the strands of the rope had to be pulled apart till they were as fine as silk, but though I tugged and dragged, and tried with all my strength to get the stuff abroad, I could make nothing of it, and at last in despair rang my bell, and when the warder of my corridor arrived explained my difficulty to him. He laughed heartily when I showed him how I had been pulling and picking away at both ends of the junk of rope, and assured me that I might have gone on at that game all day long without producing even a handful of oakum.

"Wait a minute," he continued, "and I'll get a man in who'll soon set you up to every move on the board."

Going to the adjoining cell he unlocked the door, and told the prisoner to come and show me how to manage with my oakum.

As soon as this man saw how I had been treating my rope he also went into a fit of laughter. As soon as he had recovered a little breath he took the rope out of my hands, and

told me to watch exactly what he did with it. Taking the rope by the extreme end he commenced to bang it against the iron leg of my bedstead, and when he had sufficiently loosened the strands at this end he changed ends, and treated the opposite one in exactly the same manner. Then placing a hand at each end he twisted the rope rapidly backwards and forwards for a few minutes, and gradually working his forefinger in at the top end, got one of the strands sufficiently far out for him to take hold of it and strip it off by main force. This done, the separation of the rest of the strands was easy enough, for in oakum-picking as in many other things, "*Ce n'est que le premier pas que coute,*" and a little more pulling and hauling, with a few supplementary bangs on the bedstead, soon changed the previously solid looking junk into some four-and-twenty separate strands. So far so good, but each of these strands was about half the thickness of my little finger, and saturated as they were with tar, the task of reducing them to the fine, soft, camel's hair kind of substance designated oakum seemed as difficult as ever. My tutor was indulging in a short rest, and occasionally spitting on his hands preparatory to renewing his exertions. I took up one of the strands, and trying it, said,—

"This seems as hard as a brick now ; how on earth am I going to get it apart ?"

"Oh, that'll be all right directly," replied the man, "but are you sure you'll know how to get the junk separated again another time."

"Oh, yes, I shall know all about it," I said.

"Very well, now I'll show you the next thing to do ;" and taking up some half-dozen of the strands in his hand, he beat them over the edge of the bed for a moment or two. "I suppose your hands are pretty soft, ain't they ?" he asked, looking me quietly over, "and I advise you to give your strands an extra hammering."

I showed him my hands, for he seemed to have such a thorough practical knowledge of oakum-picking in all its branches that I felt sure that he would be able to give me the best advice.

"Lor, bless me, they are the poorest kind of hands ; you might as well set some gal to pick as you," he remarked, with the greatest contempt. "Are you tasked," he added.

"No," I said, "I have only got to do what I can."

"Well, it's a lucky job for you ; for I don't suppose you'll do more than this one lot in the day, and the ordinary allowance is four of these junks ; each of 'em," he continued, "weigh a

pound a-piece, and that makes four pound for the day."

This latter piece of information was, I presume, added under the impression that my mental and physical capacities were on a par.

"Now, this will be the best way for you to manage it," he said, as he rapidly knotted a couple of strands together, and motioning me to place my foot on the edge of the bedstead, tied them firmly round my thigh; then picking up a loose strand he passed it underneath this cincture, and grasping the two ends, one in each hand, drew it quickly to and fro. The friction soon frayed the strand, the loose, fluffy oakum was drawn off and placed on the floor, and the process repeated until the whole strand was completely frayed out. "There you are," said my instructor; "when one strand's done take another, and when the pieces round your leg break just knot a couple more together, and then go ahead again. If you have a chance," he whispered rapidly, taking advantage of the warder having popped his head out of the door to see what the cause of some sudden noise in the corridor was, "just try and sneak a nail in with you if you get a chance of picking one up at exercise, and then you can soon manage your oakum with that."

He was going to make some further revelations to me, but the warder suddenly turned round again, thus putting an end to any further confidences.

"Well, do you understand all about it now?" asked the warder.

"Oh yes, thank you," I said; "I think I shall be able to manage it perfectly."

"Now, then, come along," he said, addressing the other prisoner; "you have had quite chatting enough for one day."

I worked away steadily at my oakum all day, but when the oakum master came round in the evening I had only done about the half of the piece he had given me.

"Well, I suppose you'll get to be some use some day or the other," he said, "but there's not much fear of your paying for your keep at present."

I afterwards learnt that if you had an old nail it made a wonderful difference, and it was a regular dodge for any man who had managed to get a nail—and they nearly all do manage to somehow or the other—to slip it between the slits of his ventilator before he leaves the prison, and the first thing an "old hand" does when he is placed in the cell he is to occupy is to open his ventilator, and push a strand of oakum

through the right hand slit of it, and twist it about until he has ascertained whether the oakum nail is there or not. If it is it soon clicks against the iron face of the ventilator, and a little manœuvring with the oakum strand soon drops the nail through one of the lower slits, and then it can be pulled out with the fingers.

I did not hear of this dodge until I had left the Z—— Prison, so never thought of examining my ventilator there, but I afterwards searched the one in my cell at the Xshire Prison, and found no less than three nails concealed there. The day passed more quickly now that I had something to do, but still it seemed terribly long, and oakum-picking being an entirely mechanical employment, there was nothing to distract one's mind from thoughts of the past. The mental strain on men who have formerly occupied respectable positions in life must be very great. They have so much to regret in the past, and so little to look forward to in the future, and left as they are day after day, without the slightest distraction to their thoughts, the time is almost necessarily spent in remorseful meditations that become well-nigh maddening as the days slip by. A large percentage of this class of prisoners are packed off to the

lunatic asylum long before their sentences expire, and a still greater percentage have their intellects more or less affected for the rest of their lives.

Unless one has experienced it one can have no conception of the effect of close confinement upon the nervous system. People who have not tried it are apt to say, "Well, it's only for twenty-eight days;" but if they were to try what it was like to have nothing but white-washed walls to stare at day after day, and neither book nor employment to take one's thoughts, as it were, out of one's self, I don't think they would say anything more about its being "only twenty-eight days." I am sure that men convicted for the first time ought to be allowed the use of library books at once, and if certified by the doctor as unfit for first class labour they ought to have their daily exercise at once also. A great deal of expense would be saved by Government, for the health of the prisoners would be greatly benefited by it, and they would not require the strengthening medicine and extra food that so many of them have eventually to be ordered.

The following morning the chief warder came into my cell a little before ten o'clock to tell me that the doctor had ordered me daily exer-



cise, and that I should be able to go out with the rest of the prisoners in a few moments. I was both glad and sorry to hear this—glad of the thoughts of some break in the silent monotonous day, and yet dreading the idea of being seen by others. It was true that those who would see me were in the same plight as myself, still one naturally shrank at the thought.

“Shall I be obliged to exercise with the rest of the prisoners?” I asked, vainly hoping that perhaps I might be allowed to creep out alone occasionally.

“Oh, yes,” replied the chief, “it would be impossible to make any alteration, and you won’t mind it after the first day or two; nobody will know anything about you.”

I had some doubts of this, for both the prisoners I had already been brought into contact with seemed to guess at once that I was not one of their regular set, and I timidly suggested this to the chief; and sticking the already sufficiently hideous regulation cap in the most frightful manner I could across my face, I asked him “whether I looked any different to the general run.”

“Oh, no,” he said, “you look jolly, that’s all—just jolly.”

I don’t know what the chief’s definition of

jolly would be, but if I looked jolly in the ordinary acceptance of the word, I most assuredly did not look what I felt.

“Ah, they are beginning to turn the men out,” said the chief at the sound of the rapid opening of doors in the lower part of the corridor.

“Now get your number and button it to the left side of your jacket, for the officer will be up here directly,” he continued, “and as soon as you leave your cell just follow the man in front of you, and remember to keep the proper distance, three paces behind him.”

A few moments later the warder arrived at my door; looked rather surprised at finding it open, but catching sight of the chief saluted and said, “Doctor orders that B 3.10 is to exercise, sir.”

“Quite correct,” replied the chief, and then turning to me said, “Now follow the man in front of you.” Away I started and took my place in the long line of prisoners who were rapidly passing down the staircase through the large door at the end of the corridor, and out into the airing-ground. A warder was placed at the foot of the staircase, and another at the door, so as to prevent any attempts at conversation. On entering the exercise-ground I

found some hundred or more prisoners marching solemnly along the gravel paths that bordered the huge parallelogram which formed the centre of the space. Some six or seven warders were in superintendence; one placed at each corner, and two or three more skirmishing up and down, ready to pounce upon any man who attempted to open his lips, and keeping a sharp look out that no papers were dropped or picked up. Notwithstanding all these precautions a lot of talking did go on, and the man immediately behind me kept up a conversation with the man in front of me without being detected. It was the more easily managed as one of the warders was rather deaf, and all the prisoners knew this, for any little infirmity a warder happens to have is soon discovered by the prisoners, and the information handed from one to the other, so the moment they got a safe distance from the warder placed at the opposite corner to the deaf one, they would be able to talk away in comparative safety until they passed the deaf man and came within earshot of the warder placed at the next corner again. All they had to look out for were the skirmishing warders and their movements were well controlled, for as they darted about a low hiss used to pass

along the line of prisoners effectually warning those in front. In the centre of the ground, a smaller square was formed for old men and cripples, who, unable to keep up with the other prisoners, were allowed to patter round here at their own pace. By the time all the prisoners entitled to exercise had arrived, there must have been some two hundred men on the ground, and the effect of the different coloured dresses was most extraordinary, and although I naturally expected to see some unprepossessing countenances, I was not prepared to find the whole collection looking apparently one more villainous than the other. This, in a great measure no doubt, was the result of the clothes and hair-cutting, and the fact that men after they have been a certain time in prison get a curious drawn yellow look about the face, caused, I believe, by the insufficient food and close confinement. There was, however, one exception so this general rule, in the person of a tall fair man who caught my eye as I paced along, and who, notwithstanding the eccentric chocolate and yellow suit in which he was clothed, still bore the stamp of better days about him through it all. I afterwards made some inquiries about the man, and found that he had been a gentleman, but the warders were

very reticent about him, and I could glean little beyond his name, and the bare fact of his previous respectability. There was a long, shambling, weak-kneed fellow in front of me, who shuffled along as if his boots were a great deal too big for him, and who roused the ire of the Irish warder by not keeping the regulation distance. "Now, you long man, keep your distance, will ye?" the Irishman would shout after him, but as there were a good many long fellows on the ground it was rather difficult to understand how the particular man was to know that the remark was addressed to him. At all events, he did not take any notice of what was said, and the Irishman shouted and fumed at him without any apparent effect, and I fancy he had some grudge against the man, as otherwise he could easily have taken his number as he passed by, and then addressed him by it. Gradually the Irishman worked himself into a fury, and producing a huge notebook, yelled out, "You scoundrel with the yellow and brown breeches, if you don't keep your distance I'll report you. Ye know quite well that it's you I mean," he continued, shaking his fist, "so it's no use your pretending you don't." I dare say the man did know, but as at least half the men had yellow and brown

breeches, the particular man was not bound to take any notice, and as long as the warder refrained from mentioning his number the man was clearly in the right. I heard the warder fuming and growling as I passed by, and finally he entered the man in the report, and sent it in to the governor. The prisoner's cell happened to be nearly opposite mine, so that I heard the end of the affair, which I was very glad of, as I was anxious to know whether the warder would succeed in getting the man punished. When the governor went his rounds that afternoon I heard him stop at the man's cell and ask him why he had not obeyed orders, and kept his proper distance during exercise.

"If you please, sir," replied the man, "I thought I was at the proper distance to-day, and I didn't know Mr. O'Grady was speaking to me ; I only heard him calling out that some long man was not obeying orders."

"Do you mean to say that he didn't mention your number at all in speaking to you ?" asked the governor.

"No, sir," replied the man ; "I had no idea he was speaking to me."

"Oh," said the governor, "I'll inquire into this ; but you be careful about your conduct in future."

I don't know what the governor said to O'Grady about the matter, but during the afternoon I heard him come to the prisoner's cell and say, "You scoundrel, you! what do you mean by telling the governor that you didn't know I was speaking to you? It's a thundering lie! you knew as well as I did that it was you I meant."

I could hear the man muttering away in defence, but the Irishman would not hear any excuse, but poured forth a volley of abuse, and vowed he'd be even with him yet, and get him well punished.

I have not the slightest doubt that he would do his best to carry out his charitable intention; but whether he would succeed or not was quite another matter, for Captain K—— was most careful to take notice of all cases of this kind, in which a warder was likely to have a grudge against a prisoner, and, in the event of the same warder again reporting the man, he carefully inquired into the whole matter before punishing the prisoner, and if he discovered that the warder had been needlessly trying to get the man into trouble, he made it uncommonly hot for him.

It was this that caused Captain K—— to be so much liked and respected by the prisoners,



and they always said, "When we do get into trouble we get it hot and strong ; but we know that it is our own fault, for the governor always sees that we have fair play."

I had soup for dinner, and very good it was, having quite the regulation two ounces of meat in it, and was a great improvement on the Xshire soup. I worked away at my oakum-picking as hard as I could, but made very little impression on the small mountain of rope I had in the corner of my cell. I pulled, and tugged, and beat, and scrubbed, with all my might, and still the little pile of oakum increased very, very slowly. After working for an hour or so one's fingers would be covered with tar, and stick to everything you touched, necessitating at least a quarter of an hour's scrubbing with soap and water to get them into working trim again. It helped, however, to pass the time, and was decidedly better than the crank or treadwheel.

The crank, I should think, was quite enough to drive a hasty-tempered man out of his mind. There were a large number of men employed at working it here, and a more idiotic, useless waste of labour it would be impossible to conceive. The machine is outwardly (I know nothing of its internal construction) of the

simplest description, consisting of a circular plate of iron fixed in the wall of the cell, with a long iron handle attached to the centre, and a small circular dial, about the size of the top of a teacup, placed just above the spot where the handle enters the wall. The dial is divided into three little compartments, with breakfast, 1875 turns printed in the first; dinner, 5000 turns, in the second; and supper, 4000 turns, in the third. The small hand of the dial slowly advances as the man toils away at the long iron handle, so slowly that the 5000 turns required for dinner only moves it about an inch. The handle requires a good deal of strength to make it go round smartly; and as one has to make on an average some thirty-four turns a minute, in order to get the number of turns made within the time allowed, it will easily be understood that a man has to work uncommonly hard.

As I have said before, to a man of hasty temper, it must be maddening to see that after working hard for an hour or so, he has expended all his strength in moving this horrid little hand about a quarter of an inch! How one must long to take hold of it with one's fingers and give it a good shove forward; but there is no possibility of doing this, as the dial is care-

fully covered with a good thick plate-glass face.

Think of the hideous waste of labour, and of the dead loss incurred by Government in having to feed and keep men employed in this unremunerative labour, while if they were engaged in some sensible employment, they would not only pay for their own keep, but put a handsome profit into the pocket of the Government.

I used to thank my stars that I was unfit for first class labour ; for had I been set to work at the crank it would very soon have made me cranky.

During the evening the warder of my corridor came in to see how I was getting on with my oakum, and after a little general conversation, said, " Well, we are going to lose you again, I hear."

" Good gracious ! " I answered ; " they are not going to send me back to Xshire again now ? "

" Yes ; you are to go back to-morrow," he said.

This was a piece of news with a vengeance, and I felt terribly annoyed at it. Here I had fallen into the hands of an exceedingly decent lot of warders, but there I didn't know what kind of fellows I might meet with. I had told

the chief warder from the first that I was sure to go back to Xshire ; but he had been so positive in his statements to the contrary, that I had gradually given up all idea of being moved, and the thought of being sent back all that long journey through stations and towns where I was perfectly well known was exceedingly unpleasant, and more especially so in my present disfigured condition.

“Cannot I see the doctor?” I asked. “I am sure he wouldn’t allow me to travel in my present state of health.”

“No, he has been to-day. But don’t put yourself out about it,” he continued, “for you are bound to go, and the only thing to do is to make the best of it.” Wishing me “Good-night,” he went away, leaving me in no enviable frame of mind.

As the warder said, however, there was nothing to do but to make the best of it, and I went off to bed and tried to forget all about it. I had barely finished dressing the next morning, when the chief warder bustled into my cell, followed by the receiving warder, the latter carrying my portmanteau and a large sealed parcel, that I afterwards discovered contained my rugs and great coats.

“Now, here are your clothes,” said the chief.

“Select what things you want to wear to-day, for you are going to be moved back to Xshire.”

“Don’t you think the governor would let me stop here, knowing as he does what the doctor has said about my health, and if I made an application to him?” I asked.

“No, it’s not a bit of use to do anything of the kind. Why, a special order has come down from the Home Secretary, saying that you are to be removed at once,” replied the chief, “and the governor dare not keep you here a moment longer than is absolutely necessary. Just select the clothes you wish to wear on the journey,” he continued, “and then we will repack the rest ready for you to take with you.”

I picked out the things I required, the receiving warder repacked the remainder, and, at a word from the chief, carried the packages off again.

“Now,” said the chief to me, “get your dressing and breakfast over as quick as you can, for you’ll have to leave in less than an hour, and you have got to be paraded before the governor before you start.”

I soon divested myself of the prison clothes, only too delighted to see myself once more in civilized attire, even if it were only for a few hours.

I had barely done my breakfast ere the warder of my corridor hurried in, saying, "Come along, they are waiting for you."

Down the corridor we went, and out into the passage off which the governor's office was situated. Here I found the chief, the school-master, the warder of A corridor, whom we will call Pell, and two or three other subordinates, pacing up and down, while a young prisoner in the uniform of the —th Dragoon Guards was standing to attention in the centre of the passage.

On my arrival I was directed by the chief warder to fall in alongside of the dragoon, and took the opportunity of asking the chief whether I could speak to the governor before I left.

"Very well, I'll mention it to him," he replied, "but it's no sort of use your making any application to remain."

Just as he finished speaking, the governor came out of his office, quietly munching the half of a regulation eight ounce loaf of brown bread, and, after looking me and my fellow-prisoner over, called for the officers forming the escort to step to the front. The school-master and old Pell immediately advanced, and, after saluting, stood to attention while the governor handed the various official papers

concerning us to the schoolmaster; he, as the senior officer, having the care of them on the journey.

The chief warder now stepped up and said a few words to the governor, and the latter, turning to me, said, "I understand that you wish to make some application to me; march into my office and I will listen to it."

Leading the way into his private office, a large well-furnished room, he placed himself in front of the huge desk that stood in the right-hand corner of the apartment, and demanded what I wanted.

"If you please, sir, can I travel down without being handcuffed to my fellow-prisoner. I am in very bad health, and should be very grateful if I could be allowed to lay down for part of the journey?"

"I am sorry," he replied, "but I can make no alteration in the ordinary routine; should the officers forming the escort think it necessary they will, no doubt, see that you are enabled to take rest."

There was such a sympathizing, kindly look on his face as he made this answer that I ventured to see whether I could not, at all events, get some slight mitigation of this handcuff arrangement, so I said, "Do you think, sir,



that you could allow me to go to the railway station without handcuffs, and only have them on when I am in the train ? ”

“No,” he replied, “it is impossible; I feel deeply and sincerely for you, and for the unfortunate position in which you are placed, but I cannot do for you what I wouldn’t do for any other prisoner, and you mustn’t ask me to.”

“Very well, sir,” I said; “would you mind telling me whether my position at the Xshire Prison will be the same as it is here; I mean in regard to work and food ? ”

“I presume so,” he replied. “The doctor here has, on account of your health, certified you unfit for first class labour, and granted you your bed and extra food; these facts are all stated in the medical papers that will be forwarded with you, and the doctor at Xshire will of course be handed these papers, and will, no doubt, see the advisability of continuing the same treatment. Now there is one thing more that I should like to say to you before you leave,” he continued, “and that is to try and remember that when your punishment is over you should do your best to redeem the past. Other men have gone a fifty times worse mucker than you, and yet have pulled themselves together, and, firmly resolving to lead a new life, have gone

forth and re-earned an honest and honourable name. I hope and trust that this will be the case with you. The best thing you can do when your sentence has expired is to go abroad, and there try, by earnest steady work, to retrieve the past."

"Not much time to spare, sir," said the chief warder, popping his head in at the door, and with a few hasty words of thanks, I obeyed the motion of the governor's hand and returned to my place beside the young dragoon.

"Now there's no time to lose," said the chief, bustling about. "Where are the wrist irons?—put them on," he continued, addressing old Pell, who promptly advanced, and telling me to hold out my left hand, locked the one half of the handcuff on to my wrist, and snapped the other portion on the right wrist of the dragoon.

"Here is the key of the wrist irons," said the chief, handing it to the schoolmaster; "now, come along, my men," he continued, turning to us, and leading the way down to the great door, unbolted it, and ushered us into a closed fly that was waiting in the court-yard. Telling us to take our seats with our faces to the horse, he relieved the schoolmaster and Pell of their keys, and telling them to jump in as quickly as

they could, gave the word to the driver, and off we went. On arriving at the station, Pell took us into one of the waiting rooms, while the schoolmaster went off to get the tickets, and secure a compartment to ourselves in the train.

Prisoners are permitted to talk as much as they like while journeying from one prison to another, and we were no sooner in the waiting-room than the dragoon opened the ball with the usual question that prison etiquette seems invariably to prescribe—"How long have you got?"

How sick I became of being asked this question before my twelve months were over! At any opportunity that a prisoner got of whispering a word to another it was always the same thing over and over again. I cannot myself see the point of it. I did not care a button what any other man had got, it was more than enough for me to know what I had to undergo myself, and nothing used to annoy me more than this continual repetition of the same old question. On the present occasion, however, it was pretty new to me, and I answered quietly, "Twelve months."

"Ah! just double what I have," replied the dragoon, complacently settling his stock with

his disengaged hand, evidently thoroughly enjoying that feeling of moral satisfaction that creeps over a man when he finds another in a worse plight than himself.

There was, however, little time for conversation, the express now came puffing into the station, and a few minutes later the schoolmaster hurried in to say that all was ready, and we were escorted down the platform to a second class carriage, and Pell jumping in, directed me to follow him, and as soon as we had taken our seats the schoolmaster stepped in and told the guard to lock the door, and a few seconds later away we went. The windows of the carriage were labelled "engaged," so we were certain of having it to ourselves the whole of the journey, and being a second class carriage (there were no third class attached to the express trains on this line) we had pretty comfortable accommodation. The schoolmaster and Pell were very civil, and chatted away in a most free-and-easy style, so I took the opportunity of getting all the information I could out of them.

Pell had been for many years a warder under the county, and I questioned him pretty closely with regard to the comparative merits of the late and present dietaries. The first and second class diets under the county were exceedingly

bad, and, as he tersely expressed it, “played the very deuce with some men,” but both he and the schoolmaster declared that long-sentenced men were then better off, as the fifth class county diet was greatly superior to the present fourth class. This I can quite understand, as the county diet referred to was as follows:—

Prisoners at hard labour, whose sentences exceed six months—

MALES OF SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE AND  
UPWARDS.

Breakfast and supper, 1 pint of gruel; 8 oz. bread.

Dinner (for four days), 4 oz. of dressed meat; 1 lb. potatoes; 6 oz. bread.

Dinner (for three days), 1 pint of soup; 1 lb. potatoes; 6 oz. bread.

MALES UNDER SIXTEEN AND FEMALES.

Breakfast and supper, 1 pint of gruel; 6 oz. bread.

Dinner (for four days), 3 oz. dressed meat; 1 lb. potatoes; 4 oz. bread.

Dinner (for three days), 1 pint of soup; 1 lb. potatoes; 4 oz. bread.

By referring to the Government diet I have previously given, the superiority of the above

will be easily seen, and the four meat dinners a week must have made a wonderful difference to a man shut up for twelve or eighteen months.

“ You see,” said old Pell, “ the present system is very rough on a long-sentenced man. For the first month he eats hard, he sleeps hard, and he works hard ; and the combination takes it out of him so fearfully that the slight increase of food he gets at the expiration of four months does him no good, he has gone too far, and you would be astonished at the number of men who leave prison broken down in health.”

From observations I afterwards made I am able to vouch for the truth of these statements, and when I discuss the present diet system it will be found that I am fully borne out by the facts I shall then lay before the reader.

The young dragoon growled loudly at the food, but declared that it was much better cooked and served at the Z—— Prison than at Xshire. I was a good deal interested in what he said, as I learned that he had just completed a four months' sentence in the military prison at Chatham, having been rearrested at the expiration of his sentence there (on the charge of bigamy, he was only twenty, and

more sinned against than sinning), and I therefore rightly judged that he would be able to form a pretty fair estimate of the food here. His sojourn at Chatham did not seem to have done him any harm, for he looked the picture of health, and as hard as nails, and he declared that, although they were worked hard, the food they got there was sufficient in quantity, and first-rate in quality.

I shall never forget seeing this young fellow again, after he had been a month at the Xshire Prison. I could hardly believe my eyes, that the pale, haggard, pasty-faced-looking man I then saw was the same with whom I had travelled from Z——, and it was only by looking at the name on his cell-door that I could convince myself of the fact. When he came down from Z—— with me he had done three days' imprisonment, and seeing what a strong, active-looking fellow he was, I questioned him about the treadmill, and as to whether it was such very hard work as some people wished to make it out.

“Lor, bless you,” he laughed, “it’s not hard work at all, I thought it was going to be something dreadful from what I had heard said, but once you get into the knack of it it’s nothing. It bothered me a bit for the first hour, till I



got into the dodge of it, but after that it was no trouble at all."

"Ah," said the schoolmaster; "that's true enough; it's wonderful to see the difference between a new comer and an old hand; the new man plunges and puffs, and stamps his feet down with all his might, while the habitual criminal quietly draws his feet in and out without turning a hair."

"Well, if this is indeed the case," I said, "and it is not any particular punishment to a man accustomed to daily work, it seems a great pity that all this labour and energy should be expended without bringing in a cent of money."

"So it is," replied the schoolmaster; "there at Z—— we have sixty men working away all day, and every day, just for the sake of grinding the wind."

"And there's another twenty or thirty of them turning away at them blessed cranks," broke in old Pell, "and why on earth Government don't let 'em do something for their living I can't make out."

"The fact is," said the schoolmaster, "that since the prisons came under Government the manufacturers and mechanics are everlastingly crying out that they are undersold by prison

manufactured goods, and the Government are afraid that if they continue to make more than a certain quantity of things in the prisons the mill owners and mechanics will remember it at the next election."

"Surely, if the retail traders prefer to buy prison manufactured goods, Government has a perfect right to supply them, provided they don't sell under market price," I said.

"We never sell at anything but the current market price," replied the schoolmaster; "but where we cut the manufacturers out is in making a better article; you see the prisoners have plenty of time on their hands, and we insist upon them turning out a first-class article; and the time they take doing it is little or no object, as we have nothing to pay for it. With the manufacturer it is quite another matter, he has to pay his men weekly wages, and naturally requires things to be run together pretty quickly, or he would find his wages swallow up his profits."

"Well, but supposing Government did away with the treadwheels and cranks, and insisted upon all prisoners being employed on useful industries, I can't see why matters shouldn't adjust themselves without any hardship to the

manufacturers ; if the latter have to pay weekly wages Government has to board and lodge the prisoner, and keep a very expensive staff to look after him, and surely the one expense ought to pretty well balance the other."

"No doubt," replied the schoolmaster ; "but I don't expect that you would get the manufacturers to believe it."

"How did you manage, then, when the prisons were under the county authorities?" I demanded. "They always used to pay, and pay well then."

"Oh, it was quite different in those days," said the schoolmaster, "they county people didn't care a button about the manufacturers, and everything was managed far better, and much less expensively."

"Ah, red tape, nothing but red tape," interrupted old Pell. "Before you can get so much as a mat needle for a man you have to apply to the chief, he has to apply to the governor, and the governor has to send an application to the prisoner's commissioners, and then, perhaps, with great luck, you may get this farthing needle in a fortnight, and when about five shillings' worth of paper and stamps have been spent about it."

"Ah, it's true enough," said the school-

master; "it's perfectly absurd the way every little thing has to have the sanction of the commissioners, they might surely trust the governor to spend a few shillings. Now, under the county," he continued, "all we had to do, if we wanted a thing in a hurry, and didn't want to wait until the next magistrates' meeting, was to get a line from the governor, stating that such and such an article was required, take the paper round to the nearest magistrate, who could at once sign it, and thus we had whatever we wanted in half an hour."

"The authorities will know, from the papers and accounts furnished to them when they decided to take over the prisons, that the county magistrates made the prisons pay well as long as they were under their control, and, depend upon it, Government won't be satisfied to lose money where others made it," I suggested.

"I don't know whether they'll be satisfied or not," replied the schoolmaster; "but I do know that they'll never make the prison pay as the county did if they continue the system they are pursuing at present."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because, as Pell said just now, there's too much red tape about the thing," replied the

schoolmaster. "Before you can get the simplest thing done now you have to fill up and sign about half a dozen printed forms, and this alone involves such an increased amount of work in the office, in the way of verifying and sorting the mass of papers that accumulate during the day, that where two clerks were able to do all the work under the county it takes five now. The scale of pay, too, has been considerably increased to all the officials, and especially so in all the superior grades, and although they are doing away with several of the smaller prisons, and propose to make one large prison do for two or three counties, the increase of salary, in conjunction with the lax way in which prisons are now carried on, more than counterbalances the money thus saved."

We had now arrived at the junction where we had to change carriages, and our conversation was necessarily interrupted, but there is no doubt that the schoolmaster had pitched upon the principal blemishes of the present system, and I was able afterwards to verify his statements about clerks, and to see how correct his premises had been. At the Xshire prison the office work had always been carried on under the county by one clerk, who was both clerk and store-keeper at a salary of 70*l.* a

year. The prison had only been a short time under government ere the clerk's salary was raised to 95*l.* per annum, rising to 125*l.* by yearly increments of 5*l.*; and in addition to this, he was allowed 15*l.* a year for taking charge of the stores, so that he now got a gross salary of 110*l.* per annum for doing what he had been delighted to do under the county for 70*l.* To crown all, however, it was next discovered that one clerk was insufficient to do the work, although the identical clerk had done it for ten years under the county, and the man before him for five-and-twenty, and so an additional man was appointed as assistant clerk, at a salary of thirty shillings a week, making a total of 198*l.* per annum for clerks' expenses in lieu of 70*l.* There is no doubt that there was more work to do under Government, but it was not a real increase of labour, but simply the result of the forms and ceremonies. To show how utterly idiotic some of these alterations were, I may instance the following:—Under the county there was a most admirable criminal register, consisting of one large volume for each year; and enabling one to see at a glance the prisoners' name, age, crime, distinctive marks, sentence, conduct, and in fact every minute particular concerning

him. This, however, was far too simple an arrangement for Government, and so they at once did away with the existing register and introduced a system of registration involving the use of five different books. Now, when you want to enter a man in the register, you have to enter his name and age in one book, his conduct in another, his sentence in a third, &c.: consequently it takes about ten times as long as the old system, and of course necessitates an equal amount of trouble in obtaining any information about a prisoner. When it is borne in mind that every prisoner, on arriving at the prison, has to be entered in this register, and all the particulars concerning him recollected on his discharge, and that in addition to this, inquiries are constantly being made from other prisons about previous convictions, it will easily be understood what an enormous increase of work this change has involved. The salaries of prison governors have also been very largely increased, and against this I have nothing to say, for if they want to get gentlemen to take these situations they will have, I expect, to offer still larger salaries, for the work they have to do must be most disagreeable to any honourable man. The Government theory is to give these appointments to



gentlemen only, but like various other Government theories it is continually broken in practice in order that those in whose hands the prison patronage rests may satisfy the claims of personal hangers-on. The governor of — (one of the most important of our prisons and where most of the printing is done for the other local prisons) was originally a factory hand, and entered the prison service as assistant warder, and in course of time was promoted to be a chief warder. In this respectable position he would most probably have remained for the rest of his life, but luckily for him Government took over the prisons, and he, having some claim upon one of Her Majesty's prison commissioners, was appointed to the important and lucrative governorship of —. In the same way the present acting governor of Plymouth Prison was simply the senior warder there, but on the death of the former governor, the commissioners, anxious, I presume, to save a few pounds, gave the warder the billet and allowed him an extra 1*l*. a week for the additional work. How the appointment works at — I do not at all know, but from information I received from various prisoners who had been at Plymouth, the arrangement there gives anything but

satisfaction. The food was universally condemned by all, and the complaints of the manner in which the discipline of the prison was carried on were varied and numerous. I once overheard a couple of prisoners discussing the comparative merits of the Plymouth and Xshire prisons. The one man who had tried both places was very decidedly in favour of Xshire both for food and treatment, but at the same time expressed considerable regret at having been moved from Plymouth. This naturally surprised his companion, who demanded with considerable astonishment, "What he wanted to go back for if things were better here?"

"Oh, but I didn't have nothing to do with the prison grub," replied the man, "I had been at Plymouth before; I had all my grub brought in from the tuck shop and lived proper."

"Oh, it's all on the square at that jug, is it?" demanded his companion.

"You bet," replied the man, "if you have the blunt and pull the ropes right there ain't no trouble in having what you like."

The men in question had no idea that I was listening to them, and had no reason for deceiving one another, and from confirmatory

hints that I got in other quarters I have every reason to be fully satisfied that the statement was perfectly correct. This kind of thing must needs have a very demoralizing effect, and the sooner Government has a fixed system and undeviatingly adheres to it the better it will be for all concerned. As I have already stated, the salaries of the superior officials have been largely augmented, and to balance the increased outlay the number of these appointments have been considerably reduced. Whether this course is a wise and beneficial one is a question that admits of considerable discussion, and before entering on it (and it is not within my province to do more than touch very briefly on it) it will perhaps be better that I should give a list of the former and present number of officials employed :—

#### LOCAL PRISONS.

|                                | Old Staff under<br>County<br>Management. |   | Govern-<br>ment<br>Staff. |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Governors . . . .              | 105                                      | — | 64                        |
| Deputy governors . .           | 28                                       | — | 11                        |
| Chaplains and prison ministers | 132                                      | — | 87                        |
| Surgeons . . . .               | 109                                      | — | 70                        |
| Male clerks . . . .            | 97                                       | — | 138                       |
| Female ditto . . . .           | 1                                        | — | none.                     |
| Schoolmasters . . . .          | 63                                       | — | 66                        |
| Scripture readers . .          | 2                                        | — | 1                         |

|                         |   |   |       |   |       |
|-------------------------|---|---|-------|---|-------|
| Schoolmistresses        | . | . | 28    | — | 29    |
| Lady superintendents    | . | . | 1     | — | 2     |
| Matrons                 | . | . | 103   | — | 25    |
| Male warders            | . | . | 1181  | — | 1246  |
| Female warders          | . | . | 328   | — | 331   |
| Male other sub-officers | . | . | 368   | — | 160   |
| Female do., do.         | . | . | 27    | — | none. |
|                         |   |   | <hr/> |   | <hr/> |
|                         |   |   | 2573  |   | 2230  |

The two main questions must, of course, be whether the alteration has resulted in increased economy or efficiency? With regard to the former, I think we may safely venture to assert that, notwithstanding the large reduction in the superior grades, the expenses of management have been considerably increased. By dealing *seriatim* with the subjoined list, this will, I think, be fully demonstrated. By referring to the list it will be seen that the number of governors and deputy governors has been reduced by nearly one half; but the increase of salaries more than counterbalances the reduction. Under the old system, 300*l.* per annum was about the average salary of a prison governor, and, in some exceptional cases, they went as high as 500*l.* Under Government they range from 360*l.* to 1000*l.* a year. At the Xshire Prison the governor's salary, under the county, was 300*l.* a year, with house, light,

and firing. Under Government it is 360*l.*, rising by yearly increments of 10*l.* to 450*l.* a year and a house, and money allowance for light and firing. The increase here was, of course, considerable, but in some of the larger prisons it was far greater. Take, for instance, the House of Correction, at Wandsworth: the salary there was under 300*l.* a year, now it is 800*l.* A few simple arithmetical calculations will soon prove that the Government have not gained much by their reductions in this department. The number of chaplains has been largely reduced, but their salaries have, with a few exceptions, remained the same as under the old system. Now, however, they are allowed 14*l.* a year in lieu of the coals and gas found for them by the county.

What prison ministers may refer to is difficult to say, as there was no money allowed at Xshire to any dissenting minister, and I have not been able to discover any prison where such an allowance is made. That dissenting ministers are not regularly appointed to prisons and fairly remunerated where there are a sufficient number of nonconformists confined to warrant the expenditure, must, I think, be a matter of regret to every right-minded person who impartially considers the matter. A Churchman

myself, I cannot help feeling that it is a question from which all party-spirit should be banished, and the winning of souls to Christ become the one great object to all parties. 'This would, I am sure, be greatly aided by allowing prisoners to be visited by their own ministers—men originally of nearly the same rank in life, and who would know how to speak to them, and how to bring the subject home to them. It is a time at which a man is peculiarly susceptible to religious teaching. He has it brought bitterly home to him that the "wages of sin is death," and cannot help but own how hard a taskmaster the devil is, and this must necessarily be a favourable moment for enlisting his sympathies on the side of God and the right. I am pleading now especially for that large and yearly increasing number of first offenders who pass annually through our prisons, and whom it is of the greatest importance to check in their downward career.

With regard to surgeons, I have been unable to obtain any exact information as to the changes that have taken place with regard to them; but it will be seen that their number has been greatly reduced, and I believe that the alteration made at the Xshire Prison has, with a few exceptions of increased salary, been the only change made. There, under the county, the surgeon had 100*l*.

a year, and for this sum was to visit the prison every day and supply all drugs required at his own expense. Under Government the salary and regulations are the same; but the authorities have a regular doctor's shop in the prison, and furnish all the necessary drugs. This, of course, has been a gain to the surgeon, and would, at first sight, appear to be an extra expense to the country; but if the other prison surgeons act upon the same principle as the Xshire man, affairs are pretty well balanced. Under the old system he used to give men who were ill extra food and no medicine; under the existing arrangements he gives the men any amount of medicine and is chary about ordering extra diet. The drug bill must, however, I expect, come to a considerable sum, as the wives and families of all the officials expect to be supplied with medicine from the prison store free of charge, and the number of bottles of medicine that used to go over to the governor's house for Mrs. Street, Master Street, and the Misses Street, must alone have formed no inconsiderable item in the Government bill. On the whole, I think that we may fairly conclude that, owing to the large reduction in the medical staff, the expenses in this particular branch have been considerably lessened.

Clerks I have already dealt with, and as their



number and salaries have both been nearly doubled, the increased expense as far as they are concerned has been very great.

There is only a slight increase in the number of schoolmasters under the Government, but their pay has been very considerably increased. Under the county it was 70*l.* a year, and fuel and light; under Government the salary is 100*l.* a year, rising to 150*l.*, with fuel and light. For this sum, however, they require a certificated master, whereas, under the county, teaching, like cooking, was looked upon as a thing that "anybody could do." The prison commissioners do not insist upon the schoolmasters obtaining certificates who were appointed prior to the Government taking the prisons over, but allow them to retain their appointments at a salary of 75*l.* per annum, with money allowance for fuel and light, though why on earth they should have increased the salaries of men who either would not or could not obtain a school-board certificate, is rather difficult to understand. At the Xshire Prison the schoolmaster was appointed in a very extraordinary manner. The man who held the appointment under the county retired as soon as he heard that the Government had definitely decided to take the prisons over, and

for some months the prison was left without any schoolmaster at all. The prison commissioners did not seem to trouble themselves about the matter at all; but I presume the chaplain had mentioned the vacancy to some of his High Church friends, for one fine afternoon a young fellow arrived at the chaplain's house and presented himself as a candidate for the vacant schoolmastership. His name was Blackwater, and he had previously been a corporal in the Royal Engineers. He had no school-board certificate, and his chances of obtaining one until he had studied hard for at least two or three years was exceedingly small. Experience as a teacher of course he had none; but being a very High Churchman, the chaplain waived all questions of competency at once, and decided that he was exactly the man to suit.

The finest part of the whole thing was that the chaplain forthwith brought him into the prison, gave him a bunch of keys, and started him off to see how he liked his work without saying a word to the governor, and, as a matter of fact, Blackwater had been for two or three days in the prison before the governor even knew that he was there at all. Whether he objected to this very off-hand way of doing business I do not know, but it seems rather a

curious want of supervision when a stranger could be going about the prison for two or three days without his knowledge.

At the expiration of a fortnight they thought it might be well to consult the prison commissioners, so Blackwater was proposed to them for the billet of schoolmaster. In about another week's time permission was received from them for his being taken on probation as an assistant warder—acting schoolmaster, but with simply the assistant warder's pay of twenty-three shillings a week, the commissioners declining to give any larger salary for the present as Blackwater had no certificate.

On accepting these terms, Blackwater received an order from the commissioners for him to present himself at the Xshire Prison and pass the examination required for assistant warder, consisting simply of being able to read and write, and having succeeded in passing this, he then received a written order from them to present himself at the prison and commence his work.

When this arrived he had been disporting himself in the prison for about six weeks. The schoolmaster's principal duties consist in attending upon the chaplain and keeping the latter's criminal register duly posted up; so, I

suppose, the chaplain thought he had a right to select whom he pleased, but the whole proceeding was a very funny one. It turned out far better than one could ever have expected, for Blackwater was a most respectable and, notwithstanding his Ritualistic idiosyncrasies, most worthy young fellow. Taking into consideration the fact that he had had no scholastic experience whatever, and that the amount of instruction permitted to prisoners by Government is fifteen minutes a week per man, it was wonderful how well he succeeded in teaching some of the men who were anxious to learn. It is quite impossible to teach men very much in such a short time as this, and when one knows that at least two-thirds of the men that come into prison can neither read nor write, it seems a great pity that Government does not make such arrangements as would allow of their being properly taught while they are there. Each prisoner ought to have at least an hour's instruction per week, for keeping men ignorant must be a very false economy, and fifteen minutes a week is a perfect farce.

Schoolmistresses I know nothing about, but the proposed Government staff shows a very small proportion to the number of prisons, and, as far as I can learn, they are only employed

at some of the very large prisons. At Xshire there was no schoolmistress, and the female prisoners received no instruction whatever ; so I suppose the commissioners, having an objection to woman's rights and other new-fangled ideas, wish to keep as many women as they can in a due and proper state of ignorance.

Matrons I, of course, know nothing about from my own immediate experience, but indirectly I used to hear more than enough of the one at Xshire. She was the daughter of a previous chief warder, and was appointed matron by the county authorities, at a salary of 50*l.* per annum, with house, fuel, and light. She was an ignorant, conceited, bad-tempered little woman, and soon ruined the discipline and morale of the female portion of the prison over which she had supreme authority. Nominally the female prisoners were supposed to be under the supervision of the governor, but as the latter cannot get into the female prison until he has sent for the matron, or one of the female warders, to unlock the main doors of the building for him, the supervision he is able to exercise consists, of course, in simply seeing what the matron chooses him to see ; the consequence being that every kind of abuse had crept into this portion of the Xshire Prison.

When the Government took the prisons over there was a most stringent order issued that no officer of the prison was to employ a prisoner, on any excuse whatever, to do work for him. Notwithstanding this regulation the matron used to have a couple of female prisoners down at her house all day long acting as cook and housemaid, and even went so far as to have them to wait upon her when she had friends from the town to tea. The other female warders, of course, did the same thing, and the discipline of the prison went to rack and ruin, for if any of the warders threatened to report a woman for misconduct she would quietly say,—

“Oh, very well, but if you do, I’ll let the governor know what is going on.”

There were only a few female prisoners, the daily average was about fourteen, and the staff of female warders was very small, consisting only of the matron and three warders; so that they were able to do things in quite a confidential kind of way; but had the governor really kept his eyes and ears open he must have had his suspicions aroused, for the state of affairs amongst the females was the talk not only of the prison, but of the townspeople outside. The governor used to get the matron to permit him to send his children into the female

prison once a week to have a hot bath in the prisoner's bath-room, and perhaps this helped in keeping him blind and deaf to what was going on; or otherwise one would think that the fact that month after month and quarter after quarter passing away without a female prisoner ever being reported would of itself have been amply sufficient to make him think that there must be something wrong somewhere. The male chief warder must have known what was going on, but he was not likely to say anything, as he was carrying on a *liaison* with one of the female warders, and that effectually tied his tongue.

The female prisoners used to have free fights and go on just as they pleased, and the only wonder to me is that some serious accident did not occur, and there is bound to be some frightful scandal sooner or later. The matron had a wonderful dodge for getting out of chapel on a Sunday; when there was anything interesting going on in the town or neighbourhood she used to get one of the female prisoners to fall down in a faint shortly after the commencement of the service; then, of course, the prisoner was removed, and the matron had to go off to see what was the matter. This was usually practised when the governor was away.



When Government took the prison the matron was only rated as warder—acting matron, and this was a fearful shock to her feelings; she tore her hair, howled, and danced a regular war-dance over it, and then, calming down a little, memorialized the prison commissioners and pestered the inspector to restore her to the position of full matron, but without avail, and her nose got redder and her temper worse day by day.

• It seems a great pity that Government do not appoint really ladies to these situations; there are numbers of widows of clergymen and professional men, ladies born and bred, who would be only too glad to accept them if the authorities would issue a circular stating that they wished ladies to accept these appointments, and explaining how simple the work was; the moral tone of female prisons, which is at present just about as low as it can be, would be incalculably improved, for ladies would not lend themselves to the scandalous kind of tricks I have hinted at above, and both warders and prisoners would soon learn to respect their matrons and carry out the prison rules and regulations properly and consistently.

In addition to this it would be of the greatest benefit to the female criminal classes, for the

matron, being a lady, would not be above going amongst them and trying, by precept and example, to lead them to a better and purer way of life. It would be a noble, useful, Christ-like life; and were Government to carry out the suggestion, I would guarantee that there would be fifty times as many well-born ladies applying for the appointments as there were vacancies to be filled.

END OF VOL. I.



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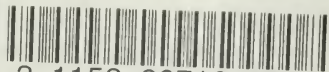
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